THE

PRINCESS OF CLEVES.

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Isaac Taylor del. et sculp.

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

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BRITISH MUSEUM

CHARACTER

OF THE

PRINCESS OF CLEVES,

BY THE EDITOR.

THE ſtory of the Princeſs of Cleves *, which we now preſent to our readers, has been long and univerſally allowed to ſtand foremoſt in that peculiar ſpecies of writing, where hiſtorical facts are intermixed with the anecdotes and adventures of private perſonages. The ſcene is laid in the court of France, at an era when galantry had riſen to its greateſt height in that polite nation; though the romantic notions of ancient chivalry had begun to grow obſolete, but were not yet intirely exploded; for we here meet with a tournament, appointed in honour of the princeſs Elizabeth's marriage with

* The original of this Novel is in French. The author has not put any name to the piece, and gives this modeſt reaſon for it; "That he would wait 'till he found how it was received by the public, before he would venture to declare himſelf." The ſecret has never ſince tranſpired.

In this uncertainty, every one is left at liberty to frame a conjecture about the Author; and, in my opinion, this work ſeems to have been written by ſome ingenious woman of the age in which it appeared; as the delicacy of ſentiment, and peculiar nicety of manners, with which the princeſs of Cleves conducted herſelf in the moſt difficult ſituations, could only have ariſen in the female breaſt. Men are not apt to imagine ſuch refinements; and even, perhaps, leſs ſo to impute them to the ſex.

the king of Spain; which, however, was the laſt that ever was exhibited in France.

From this particular circumſtance, the reader may form an idea, that the manners and ſentiments of thoſe times differed widely from thoſe of the preſent; and of courſe, the delicacy with which the princeſs of Cleves and the duke of Nemours conducted themſelves, though under the influence of an unjuſtifiable paſſion, ought not to be deemed unnatural, though, perhaps, in theſe more licentious days it may be ſuppoſed improbable.

There are ſome ſituations in the following Novel, more refined and elegant than any we ever remember to have met with before; particularly, that of our heroine's flying for ſanctuary, as it were, from herſelf, into the boſom of her huſband, by revealing to him her paſſion for another. What a confidant for a modern dame! The line which the princeſs of Cleves purſues through the whole ſtory, is doubtleſs worthy of emulation to thoſe who may be ſo unhappy as to ſtand in the ſame predicament; but her conduct, after the death of her huſband, will, we fear, rather be conſidered as a ſubject for admiration, than imitation.

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES.

PART I.

GRANDEUR and gallantry never appeared with more luſtre in France, than in the laſt years of Henry the Second's reign. This prince was amorous and handſome, and though his paſſion for Diana of Poictiers, ducheſs of Valentinois, was of above twenty years ſtanding, it was not the leſs violent, nor did he give leſs diſtinguiſhing proofs of it.

As he was happily turned to excel in bodily exerciſes, he took a particular delight in them, ſuch as hunting, tennis, running at the ring, and the like diverſions. Madam de Valentinois gave ſpirit to all entertainments of this ſort, and appeared at them with grace and beauty equal to that of her grand-daughter, madam de la Marke, who was then unmarried; the queen's preſence ſeemed to authoriſe her's.

The queen was handſome, though not young; ſhe loved grandeur, magnificence and pleaſure; ſhe was

married to the king while he was duke of Orleans, during the life of his elder brother, the dauphin, a prince whoſe great qualities promiſed in him a worthy ſucceſſor of his father Francis the firſt.

The queen's ambitious temper made her taſte the ſweets of reigning, and ſhe ſeemed to bear with perfect eaſe the king's paſſion for the ducheſs of Valentinois, nor did ſhe expreſs the leaſt jealouſy of it; but ſhe was ſo ſkilful a diſſembler, that it was hard to judge of her real ſentiments, and policy obliged her to keep the ducheſs about her perſon, that ſhe might draw the king to her at the ſame time. This prince took great delight in the converſation of women, even of ſuch as he had no paſſion for; for he was every day at the queen's court, when ſhe held her aſſembly, which was a concourſe of all that was beautiful and excellent in either ſex.

Never were finer women or more accompliſhed men ſeen in any court; and nature ſeemed to have taken pleaſure in laviſhing her greateſt graces on the greateſt perſons. The princeſs Elizabeth, ſince queen of Spain, began now to manifeſt an uncommon wit, and to diſplay thoſe beauties which proved afterwards ſo fatal to her. Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland, who had juſt married the dauphin, and was called the queen-dauphin, had all the perfections of mind and body; ſhe had been educated in the court of France, and had imbibed all the politeneſs of it; ſhe was by nature ſo well formed to ſhine in every thing that was polite, that notwithſtanding her youth, none ſurpaſſed her in the moſt refined accompliſhments. The queen, her mother-in-law, and the king's ſiſter, were alſo extreme lovers of muſic, plays, and poetry; for the taſte which Francis the Firſt had for the Belles Lettres was not yet extinguiſhed in France; and as his ſon was addicted to exerciſes, no kind of pleaſure was wanting at court. But what rendered this court ſo ſplendid, was the preſence of ſo many great princes, and perſons of the higheſt quality and merit: thoſe I ſhall name, in their different characters,

characters, were the admiration and ornament of their age.

The king of Navarre drew to himſelf the reſpect of all the world, both by the greatneſs of his birth, and by the dignity that appeared in his perſon; he was remarkable for his ſkill and courage in war. The duke of Guiſe had alſo given proofs of extraordinary valour, and had been ſo ſucceſsful, that there was not a general who did not look upon him with envy; to his valour he added a moſt exquiſite genius and underſtanding, grandeur of mind, and a capacity equally turned for military or civil affairs. His brother, the cardinal of Loraine, was a man of boundleſs ambition, and of extraordinary wit and eloquence, and had beſides acquired a vaſt variety of learning, which enabled him to make himſelf very conſiderable by defending the Catholic religion, which began to be attacked at that time. The chevalier de Guiſe, afterwards called Grand Prior, was a prince beloved by all the world, of a comely perſon, full of wit and addreſs, and diſtinguiſhed through all Europe for his valour. The prince of Conde, though little indebted to nature in his perſon, had a noble ſoul, and the livelineſs of his wit made him amiable even in the eyes of the fineſt women. The duke of Nevers, diſtinguiſhed by the high employments he had poſſeſſed, and by the glory he had gained in war, though in an advanced age, was yet the delight of the court: he had three ſons very accompliſhed; the ſecond, called the prince of Cleves, was worthy to ſupport the honour of his houſe; he was brave and generous, and ſhewed a prudence above his years. The viſcount de Chartres, deſcended of the illuſtrious family of Vendome, whoſe name the princes of the blood have thought it no diſhonour to wear, was equally diſtinguiſhed for gallantry; he was genteel, of a fine mien, valiant, generous, and all theſe qualities he poſſeſſed in a very uncommon degree; in ſhort, if any one could be compared to the duke de Nemours, it was he.

The duke de Nemours was a maſter-piece of nature; the beauty of his perſon, inimitable as it was, was his leaſt perfection; what placed him above other men, was a certain agreeableneſs in his diſcourſe, his actions, his looks, which was obſervable in none beſide himſelf: He had in his behaviour a gaiety that was equally pleaſing to men and women; in his exerciſes he was very expert; and in dreſs he had a peculiar manner, which was followed by all the world, but could never be imitated: in fine, ſuch was the air of his whole perſon, that it was impoſſible to fix one's eye on any thing elſe, wherever he was. There was not a lady at court whoſe vanity would not have been gratified by his addreſſes; few of thoſe whom he addreſſed, could boaſt of having reſiſted him; and even thoſe for whom he expreſſed no paſſion, could not forbear expreſſing one for him: his natural gaiety and diſpoſition to gallantry was ſo great, that he could not refuſe ſome part of his cares and attention to thoſe who made it their endeavour to pleaſe him; and accordingly he had ſeveral miſtreſſes, but it was hard to gueſs which of them was in poſſeſſion of his heart. He made frequent viſits to the queen-dauphin; the beauty of this princeſs, the ſweetneſs of her temper, the care ſhe took to oblige every body, and the particular eſteem ſhe expreſſed for the duke de Nemours, gave ground to believe, that he had raiſed his views even to her. Meſſieurs de Guiſe, whoſe niece ſhe was, had ſo far encreaſed their authority and reputation by this match, that their ambition prompted them to aſpire at an equality with the princes of the blood, and to ſhare in power with the conſtable Montmorency. The king entruſted the conſtable with the chief ſhare in the adminiſtration of the government, and treated the duke of Guiſe and the mareſchal de St. André as his favourites; but whether favour or buſineſs admitted men to his preſence, they could not preſerve that privilege without the good-liking of the ducheſs of Valentinois; for though ſhe was no longer in poſſeſſion either of youth or beauty,

ſhe

ſhe yet reigned ſo abſolutely in his heart, that his perſon and ſtate ſeemed entirely at her diſpoſal.

The king had ſuch an affection for the conſtable, that he was no ſooner poſſeſſed of the government, but he recalled him from the baniſhment he had been ſent into by Francis the Firſt: thus was the court divided between meſſieurs de Guiſe, and the conſtable, who was ſupported by the princes of the blood; and both parties made it their care to gain the ducheſs of Valentinois. The duke d' Aumale, the duke of Guiſe's brother, had married one of her daughters, and the conſtable aſpired to the ſame alliance; he was not contented with having married his eldeſt ſon with madam Diana, the king's daughter by a Piemonteſe lady, who turned nun as ſoon as ſhe was brought to bed. This marriage had met with a great many obſtacles from the promiſes which monſieur Montmorency had made to madam de Piennes, one of the maids of honour to the queen; and though the king had ſurmounted them with extreme patience and goodneſs, the conſtable did not think himſelf ſufficiently eſtabliſhed, unleſs he ſecured madam de Valentinois in his intereſt, and ſeparated her from meſſieurs de Guiſe, whoſe greatneſs began to give her uneaſineſs. The ducheſs had obſtructed as much as ſhe could the marriage of the dauphin with the queen of Scotland; the beauty and forward wit of that young queen, and the credit which her marriage gave to meſſieurs de Guiſe, were inſupportable to her; ſhe in particular hated the cardinal of Loraine, who had ſpoke to her with ſeverity, and even with contempt; ſhe was ſenſible he took the party of the queen, ſo that the conſtable found her very well diſpoſed to unite her intereſts with his, and to enter into alliance with him, by marrying her grand-daughter, madam de la Marke, with monſieur d'Anville, his ſecond ſon, who ſucceeded him in his employment under the reign of Charles the Ninth. The conſtable did not expect to find the ſame diſinclination to marriage in his ſecond ſon, which he had found in his eldeſt; but he

proved miſtaken. The duke d'Anville was deſperately in love with the dauphin-queen, and how little hope ſoever he might have of ſucceeding in his paſſion, he could not prevail with himſelf to enter into an engagement that wou'd divide his cares. The mareſchal de St. André was the only perſon in the court, that had not liſted in either party: he was a particular favourite, and the king had a perſonal affection for him; he had taken a liking to him ever ſince he was dauphin, and created him a mareſchal of France at an age in which others rarely obtain the leaſt dignities: his favour with the king gave him a luſtre which he ſupported by his merit and the agreeableneſs of his perſon, by a ſplendor in his table and furniture, and by the moſt profuſe magnificence that ever was known in a private perſon, the king's liberality enabling him to bear ſuch an expence. This prince was bounteous even to prodigality to thoſe he favoured, and though he had not all the great qualities, he had very many; particularly he took delight, and had great ſkill in military affairs; he was alſo ſucceſsful, and excepting the battle of St. Quintin, his reign had been a continued ſeries of victory; he won in perſon the battle of Renti, Piemont was conquer'd, the Engliſh were driven out of France, and the emperor Charles V. found his good fortune decline before the walls of Metz, which he beſieged in vain, with all the forces of the empire and of Spain: but the diſgrace received at St. Quintin leſſened the hopes we had of extending our conqueſts; and as Fortune ſeemed to divide herſelf between two kings, they both found themſelves inſenſibly diſpoſed to peace.

At this time, the king received the news of the death of queen Mary of England; his majeſty diſpatched forthwith the count de Randan to queen Elizabeth, to congratulate her on her acceſſion to the crown, and they received him with great diſtinction; for her affairs were ſo precarious at that time, that nothing could be more advantageous to her, than to ſee her title acknowledged by

by the king. The count found ſhe had a thorough knowledge of the intereſts of the French court, and of the characters of thoſe who compoſed it; but in particular, ſhe had a great idea of the duke of Nemours: ſhe ſpoke to him ſo often, and with ſo much earneſtneſs concerning him, that the embaſſador upon his return declared to the king, that there was nothing which the duke of Nemours might not expect from that princeſs, and that he made no queſtion ſhe might even be brought to marry him. The king communicated it to the duke the ſame evening, and cauſed the count de Randan to relate to him all the converſations he had had with queen Elizabeth, and in concluſion advis'd him to puſh his fortune: the duke of Nemours imagined at firſt that the king was not in earneſt; but when he found to the contrary, If, by your advice, Sir, ſaid he, I engage in this chimerical undertaking for your majeſty's ſervice, I muſt entreat your majeſty to keep the affair ſecret, till the ſucceſs of it ſhall juſtify me to the public; I wou'd not be thought guilty of the intolerable vanity, to think that a queen, who has never ſeen me, would marry me for love. The king promiſed to let nobody into the deſign but the conſtable, ſecrecy being neceſſary, he knew, to the ſucceſs of it. The count de Randan adviſed the duke to go to England under pretence of travelling; but the duke, diſapproving this propoſal, ſent Mr. Lignerol, a ſprightly young gentleman his favourite, to ſound the queen's inclinations, and to endeavour to make ſome ſteps towards advancing that affair: In the mean time, he paid a viſit to the duke of Savoy, who was then at Bruſſels with the king of Spain.

There appeared at this time a lady at court, who drew the eyes of the whole world; and one may imagine ſhe was a perfect beauty, to gain admiration in a place where there were ſo many fine women; ſhe was of the ſame family with the viſcount of Chartres, and one of the greateſt heireſſes of France; her father died young, and left her to the guardianſhip of madam de Chartres, his

wife, whoſe wealth, virtue, and merit were uncommon. After the loſs of her huſband ſhe retired from court, and lived many years in the country; during this retreat, her chief care was beſtowed on the education of her daughter; but ſhe did not make it her buſineſs to cultivate her wit and beauty only, ſhe took care alſo to inculcate virtue into her tender mind, and to make it amiable to her. The generality of mothers imagine, that it is ſufficient to forbear talking of gallantries before young people, to prevent their engaging in them; but madam de Chartres was of a different opinion: ſhe often entertained her daughter with deſcriptions of love; ſhe ſhewed her what there was agreeable in it, that ſhe might the more eaſily perſuade her wherein it was dangerous; ſhe related to her the inſincerity, the faithleſſneſs, and want of candour in men, and the domeſtic misfortunes that flow from engagements with them; on the other hand, ſhe made her ſenſible, what tranquillity attends the life of a virtuous woman, and what luſtre modeſty gives to a perſon who poſſeſſes birth and beauty; at the ſame time ſhe informed her, how difficult it was to preſerve this virtue, except by an extreme diſtruſt of one's ſelf, and by a conſtant attachment to the only thing which conſtitutes a woman's happineſs, to love and to be loved by her huſband.

This heireſs was, at that time, one of the greateſt matches in France; and though ſhe was very young, ſeveral marriages had been propoſed to her mother; but madam de Chartres being ambitious, hardly thought any thing worthy of her daughter; and when ſhe was ſixteen years of age ſhe brought her to court. The viſcount of Chartres, who went to meet her, was with reaſon ſurpriſed at the beauty of the young lady; her fine hair and lovely complexion gave her a luſtre that was peculiar to herſelf; all her features were regular, and her whole perſon was full of grace.

The day after her arrival, ſhe went to chuſe ſome jewels at a famous Italian's; this man came from Florence

rence with the queen, and had acquired ſuch immenſe riches by his trade, that his houſe ſeemed rather fit for a prince than a merchant; while ſhe was there, the prince of Cleves came in, and was ſo touched with her beauty, that he could not diſſemble his ſurprize, nor could Mademoiſelle de Chartres forbear bluſhing upon obſerving the aſtoniſhment he was in; nevertheleſs ſhe recollected herſelf, without taking any further notice of him, than ſhe was obliged to do in civility to a perſon of his ſeeming rank. The prince of Cleves viewed her with admiration, and could not comprehend who that fine lady was, whom he did not know. He found by her air, and her retinue, that ſhe was of the firſt quality; by her youth he ſhould have taken her to be a maid; but not ſeeing her mother, and hearing the Italian call her Madam, he did not know what to think; and all the while he kept his eyes fixed upon her, he found that his behaviour embarraſſed her, unlike to moſt young ladies, who always behold with pleaſure the effect of their beauty; he found too, that he had made her impatient to be gone; and in truth ſhe went away immediately: the prince of Cleves was not uneaſy at himſelf on having loſt the view of her, in hopes of being informed who ſhe was; but when he found ſhe was not known, he was under the utmoſt ſurprize; her beauty, and the modeſt air he had obſerved in her actions, affected him ſo, that from that moment he entertained a paſſion for her. In the evening he waited on his majeſty's ſiſter.

The prince of Cleves went there according to his cuſtom; he was ſo touched with the wit and beauty of Mademoiſelle de Chartres, that he could talk of nothing elſe; he related his adventure aloud, and was never tired with the praiſes of this lady, whom he had ſeen, but did not know. Madame told him, that there was nobody like her he deſcribed, and that if there were, ſhe would be known by the whole world. Madam de Dampiere, one of the princeſs's ladies of honour, and a friend of

madam de Chartres, overhearing the converſation, came up to her highneſs, and whiſpered her in the ear, that it was certainly Mademoiſelle de Chartres whom the prince had ſeen. Madame, returning to her diſcourſe with the prince, told him, if he would give her his company again the next morning, he ſhould ſee the beauty he was ſo much touched with. Accordingly Mademoiſelle de Chartres came the next day to court, and was received by both queens in the moſt obliging manner that can be imagined, and with ſuch admiration by every body elſe, that nothing was to be heard at court but her praiſes; which ſhe received with ſo agreeable a modeſty, that ſhe ſeemed not to have heard them, or at leaſt not to be moved with them. She afterwards went to wait upon Madame; that princeſs, after having commended her beauty, informed her of the ſurprize ſhe had given the prince of Cleves; the prince came in immediately after: Come hither, ſaid ſhe to him, ſee, if I have not kept my word with you; and if, at the ſame time that I ſhew you Mademoiſelle de Chartres, I do not ſhew you the lady you are in ſearch of. You ought to thank me, at leaſt, for having acquainted her how much you are her admirer.

The prince of Cleves was overjoyed to find, that the lady he admired was of quality equal to her beauty; he addreſſed her, and entreated her to remember that he was her firſt lover, and had conceived the higheſt honour and reſpect for her, before he knew her.

The chevalier de Guiſe, and the prince, who were two boſom friends, took their leave of Madame together. They were no ſooner gone, but they began to launch out into the praiſes of Mademoiſelle de Chartres without bounds; they were ſenſible at length that they had run into exceſs in her commendation, and ſo both gave over for that time; but they were obliged the next day to renew the ſubject, for this new-riſen beauty long continued to ſupply diſcourſe to the whole court; the queen herſelf was laviſh in her praiſe, and ſhewed her particular

lar marks of favour; the queen-dauphin made her one of her favourites, and begged her mother to bring her often to her court; the princeſſes, the king's daughters, made her a party in all their diverſions; in ſhort, ſhe had the love and admiration of the whole court, except that of the ducheſs of Valentinois: not that this young beauty gave her umbrage; long experience convinced her ſhe had nothing to fear on the part of the king, but ſhe had ſo great a hatred for the viſcount of Chartres, whom ſhe had endeavoured to bring into her intereſt by marrying him with one of her daughters, and who had joined himſelf to the queen's party, that ſhe could not have the leaſt favourable thought of a perſon who bore his name, and was a great object of his friendſhip.

The prince of Cleves became paſſionately in love with Mademoiſelle de Chartres, and ardently wiſhed to marry her; but he was afraid the haughtineſs of her mother would not ſtoop to match her with one who was not the head of his family: nevertheleſs, his birth was illuſtrious, and his elder brother, the count d'En, had juſt married a lady ſo nearly related to the royal family, that this apprehenſion was rather the effect of his love, than grounded on any ſubſtantial reaſon. He had a great number of rivals; the moſt formidable among them, for his birth, his merit, and the luſtre which royal favour caſt upon his houſe, was the chevalier de Guiſe; this gentleman fell in love with Mademoiſelle de Chartres the firſt day he ſaw her, and he diſcovered the prince of Cleves's paſſion, as the prince of Cleves diſcovered his. Though they were intimate friends, their having the ſame pretenſions gradually created a coolneſs between them, and their friendſhip grew into an indifference, without their being able to come to an explanation on the matter. The prince of Cleves's good fortune in having ſeen Mademoiſelle de Chartres firſt ſeemed to be a happy preſage, and gave him ſome advantage over his rivals; but he foreſaw great obſtructions on the part of the duke of Nevers, his father: the duke was ſtrictly at-

tached to the ducheſs of Valentinois, and the viſcount de Chartres was her enemy, which was a ſufficient reaſon to hinder the duke from conſenting to the marriage of his ſon with a niece of the viſcount's.

Madam de Chartres, who had taken ſo much care to inſpire virtue into her daughter, did not fail to continue the ſame care in a place where it was ſo neceſſary, and where there were ſo many dangerous examples. Ambition and gallantry were the ſoul of the court, and employed both ſexes equally; there were ſo many different intereſts and ſo many cabals, and the ladies had ſo great a ſhare in them, that love was always mixed with buſineſs, and buſineſs with love.

The chevalier de Guiſe was ſo open and unguarded, with reſpect to his paſſion for Mademoiſelle de Chartres, that nobody was ignorant of it; nevertheleſs he ſaw nothing but impoſſibilities in what he deſired: he was ſenſible that he was not a proper match for her, by reaſon of the narrowneſs of his fortune, which was not ſufficient to ſupport his dignity; and he was ſenſible beſides, that his brothers would not approve of his marrying, the marriages of younger brothers being looked upon as what tends to the leſſening great families.

The prince of Cleves had not given leſs public proofs of his love, than the chevalier de Guiſe had done, which made the duke of Nevers very uneaſy; however, he thought that he needed only to ſpeak to his ſon to make him change his conduct; but he was very much ſurpriſed to find in him a ſettled deſign of marrying Mademoiſelle de Chartres, and flew out into ſuch exceſſes of paſſion on that ſubject, that the occaſion of it was ſoon known to the whole court, and among others to madam de Chartres: ſhe never imagined that the duke of Nevers would not think her daughter a very advantageous match for his ſon, nor was ſhe a little aſtoniſhed to find, that the houſes both of Cleves and Guiſe avoided her alliance, inſtead of courting it. Her reſentment on this account put her upon finding out a match

match for her daughter, which would raiſe her above thoſe that imagined themſelves above her: after having looked about, ſhe fixed upon the prince dauphin, ſon of the duke de Montpenſier, one of the moſt conſiderable perſons then at court. As madam de Chartres abounded in wit, and was aſſiſted by the viſcount, who was in great conſideration, and as her daughter herſelf was a very conſiderable match, ſhe managed the matter with ſo much dexterity and ſucceſs, that Monſieur de Montpenſier appeared to deſire the marriage, and there was no appearance of any difficulties in it.

But the ducheſs of Valentinois being warned of the deſign in view, had traverſed it with ſo much care, and prepoſſeſſed the king ſo much againſt it, that when Monſieur d'Anville came to ſpeak to his majeſty about it, he plainly ſhewed he did not approve of it, and commanded him to ſignify as much to the prince de Montpenſier. One may eaſily judge what the ſentiments of madam de Chartres were, upon the breaking off of an affair which ſhe had ſet her mind ſo much upon, and the ill ſucceſs of which gave ſuch an advantage to her enemies, and was ſo great a prejudice to her daughter.

No one now entertained any further thoughts of Mademoiſelle de Chartres, either fearing to incur the king's diſpleaſure, or deſpairing to ſucceed with a lady, who aſpired to an alliance with a prince of the blood. The prince of Cleves alone was not diſheartened at either of theſe conſiderations; the death of the duke of Nevers his father, which happened at that time, ſet him at entire liberty to follow his inclination; and no ſooner was the time of mourning expired, but he wholly applied himſelf to the gaining of Mademoiſelle de Chartres. It was lucky for him that he addreſſed her at a time when what had happened had diſcouraged the approaches of others. What allayed his joy, was his fear of not being the moſt agreeable to her; and he would

would have preferred the happineſs of pleaſing, to the certainty of marrying her without being beloved.

The chevalier de Guiſe had given him ſome jealouſy; but as it was rather grounded on the merit of that prince, than on any action of Mademoiſelle de Chartres, he made it his whole endeavour to diſcover, if he was ſo happy as to have his addreſſes admitted and approved: he had no opportunity of ſeeing her but at court or public aſſemblies, ſo that it was very difficult for him to get a private converſation with her; at laſt he found means to do it, and informed her of his intention and of his love, with all the reſpect imaginable.

As Mademoiſelle de Chartres had a noble and generous heart, ſhe was ſincerely touched with gratitude for the prince of Cleves's behaviour; this gratitude gave a certain ſweetneſs to her words and anſwers, ſufficient to furniſh hopes to a man ſo deſperately enamoured as the prince was; ſo that he flattered himſelf, in ſome meaſure, that he ſhould ſucceed in what he ſo much wiſhed for.

She gave her mother an account of this converſation; and madam de Chartres told her, that the prince of Cleves had ſo many good qualities, and diſcovered a diſcretion ſo much above his years, that if her inclination led her to marry him, ſhe would conſent to it with pleaſure. Mademoiſelle de Chartres made anſwer, that ſhe obſerved in him the ſame good qualities; that ſhe ſhould have leſs reluctance in marrying him than any other man, but that ſhe had no particular affection to his perſon.

The next day the prince cauſed his thoughts to be communicated to madam de Chartres, who gave her conſent to what was propoſed to her; nor had ſhe the leaſt diſtruſt but that, in the prince of Cleves, ſhe provided her daughter a huſband capable of ſecuring her affections. The articles were concluded; the king was acquainted with it, and the marriage made public.

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The prince of Cleves found himſelf happy, but yet not entirely contented: he ſaw with a great deal of regret, that the ſentiments of Mademoiſelle de Chartres did not exceed thoſe of eſteem and reſpect; and he could not flatter himſelf that ſhe concealed more obliging thoughts of him, ſince the ſituation they were in permitted her to diſcover them without the leaſt violence done to modeſty. It was not long before he expoſtulated with her on this ſubject: Is it poſſible, ſays he, that I ſhould not be happy in marrying you? and yet it is certain, I am not. You only ſhew me a ſort of civility which is far from giving me ſatisfaction; you expreſs none of thoſe pretty inquietudes, the concern, and impatience, which are the ſoul of love; you are no further affected with my paſſion, than you would be with one which flowed only from the advantage of your fortune, and not from the beauty of your perſon.---It is unjuſt in you to complain, replied the princeſs, I do not know what you can deſire of me more; I think decency will not allow me to go further than I do.---It is true, replied he, you ſhew ſome appearances I ſhould be ſatisfied with, were there any thing beyond; but inſtead of being reſtrained by decency, it is that only which makes you act as you do; I am not in your heart and inclinations, and my preſence neither gives you pain nor pleaſure.---You cannot doubt, replied ſhe, but it is a ſenſible pleaſure to me to ſee you; and when I do ſee you, I bluſh ſo often, that you cannot doubt, but the ſeeing you gives me pain alſo.---Your bluſhes, madam, replied he, cannot deceive me; they are ſigns of modeſty, but do not prove the heart to be affected, and I ſhall conclude nothing more from hence than what I ought.

Mademoiſelle de Chartres did not know what to anſwer; theſe diſtinctions were above her comprehenſion. The prince of Cleves plainly ſaw ſhe was far from having that tenderneſs of affection for him, which was requiſite

to his happineſs; it was manifeſt ſhe could not feel a paſſion which ſhe did not underſtand.

The chevalier de Guiſe returned from a journey a few days before the marriage. He was extremely afflicted to ſee her become the wife of another: his grief, however, did not extinguiſh his paſſion; and his love was as great as ever. Mademoiſelle de Chartres was not ignorant of it; and he made her ſenſible at his return, that ſhe was the cauſe of that deep melancholy which appeared in his countenance. He had ſo much merit, and ſo much agreeableneſs, that it was almoſt impoſſible to make him unhappy without pitying him, nor could ſhe forbear pitying him; but her pity did not lead to love. She acquainted her mother with the uneaſineſs which the chevalier's paſſion gave her.

Madam de Chartres admired the honour of her daughter, and ſhe admired it with reaſon, for never was any one more naturally ſincere; but ſhe was ſurpriſed, at the ſame time, at the inſenſibility of her heart, and the more ſo, when ſhe found that the prince of Cleves had not been able to affect her any more than others: for this reaſon, ſhe took great pains to endear her huſband to her, and to make her ſenſible how much ſhe owed to the affection he had for her, and to the tenderneſs he expreſſed for her, by preferring her to all other matches, at a time when no one elſe durſt entertain the leaſt thoughts of her.

The marriage was ſolemnized at the Louvre; and in the evening the king and the two queens, with the whole court, ſupped at madam de Chartres's houſe, where they were entertained with the utmoſt magnificence. The chevalier de Guiſe durſt not diſtinguiſh himſelf by being abſent from the ceremony; but he was ſo little maſter of himſelf, that it was eaſy to obſerve his concern.

The prince of Cleves did not find that Mademoiſelle de Chartres had changed her mind by changing her name; his quality of a huſband entitled him to the

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largeſt privileges, but gave him no greater ſhare in the affections of his wife: hence it was, that though he was her huſband, he did not ceaſe to be her lover, becauſe he had always ſomething to wiſh beyond what he poſſeſſed; and though ſhe lived perfectly eaſy with him, yet he was not perfectly happy. He preſerved for her a paſſion full of violence and inquietude, but without jealouſy, which had no ſhare in his griefs. Never was huſband leſs inclined to it, and never was wife farther from giving the leaſt occaſion for it. She was nevertheleſs conſtantly in view of the court; ſhe frequented the courts of the two queens, and of Madame: all the people of galantry ſaw her both there and at her brother-in-law the duke of Nevers's, whoſe houſe was open to the whole world; but ſhe had an air which inſpired ſo great reſpect, and had in it ſomething ſo diſtant from galantry, that the mareſchal de St. Andre, a bold man, and ſupported by the king's favour, became her lover, without daring to let her know it any otherwiſe than by his cares and aſſiduities. A great many others were in the ſame condition: and madam de Chartres had added to her daughter's diſcretion ſo exact a conduct with regard to decorum, that every body was ſatisfied ſhe was not to be come at.

A marriage was now agreed upon, between the duke of Loraine and Madam Claude of France, the king's ſecond daughter; and the month of February was appointed for the nuptials.

In the mean time the duke of Nemours continued at Bruſſels, his thoughts being wholly employed on his deſign in England; he was continually ſending or receiving couriers from thence; his hopes encreaſed every day, and at laſt Lignerol ſent him word, that it was time to finiſh by his preſence what was ſo well begun. He received this news with all the joy a young, ambitious man is capable of, who ſees himſelf advanced to a throne merely by the force of his perſonal merit; his mind inſenſibly accuſtomed itſelf to the grandeur of a

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royal ſtate; and whereas he had at firſt rejected this undertaking as an impracticable thing, the difficulties of it were now worn out of his imagination, and he no longer ſaw any thing to obſtruct his way.

He ſent away in haſte to Paris to give the neceſſary orders for providing a magnificent equipage, that he might make his appearance in England with a ſplendor ſuitable to the deſign he was to conduct; and ſoon after he followed himſelf, to aſſiſt at the marriage of the duke of Loraine.

He arrived the evening before the eſpouſals, and that very evening waited on the king to give him an account of his affair, and to receive his orders and advice how to govern himſelf in it. Afterwards he waited on the queens; but the princeſs of Cleves was not there; ſo that ſhe did not ſee him, nor ſo much as know of his arrival. She had heard every body ſpeak of this celebrated prince, as of the handſomeſt and moſt agreeable man at court; and the queen-dauphin had deſcribed him in ſuch a manner, and ſpoke of him to her ſo often, that ſhe had raiſed in her a curioſity and even impatience to ſee him.

The princeſs of Cleves employed the day of wedding in dreſſing herſelf, that ſhe might appear with the greater advantage at the ball and royal banquet that were to be at the Louvre. When ſhe came, every one admired both her beauty and her dreſs. The ball began, and while ſhe was dancing with the duke of Guiſe, a noiſe was heard at the door of the hall, as if way was making for ſome perſon of uncommon diſtinction. She had finiſhed her dance, and as ſhe was caſting her eyes round to ſingle out ſome other perſon, the king deſired her to take him who came in laſt; ſhe turned about, and viewing him as he was paſſing over the ſeats to come to the place where they danced, ſhe immediately concluded he was the duke of Nemours. The duke's perſon was turned in ſo delicate a manner, that it was impoſſible not to expreſs ſurprize at the firſt ſight

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of him, particularly that evening, when the care he had taken to adorn himſelf added much to the fine air of his carriage. It was as impoſſible to behold the princeſs of Cleves without equal admiration.

The duke de Nemours was ſtruck with ſuch ſurprize at her beauty, that when they approached and paid their reſpects to each other, he could not forbear ſhewing ſome tokens of his admiration. When they begun to dance, a ſoft murmur of praiſe ran through the whole company. The king and the two queens remembering, that the duke and princeſs had never ſeen one another before, found ſomething very particular in ſeeing them dance together without knowing each other; they called them, as ſoon as they had ended their dance, without giving them time to ſpeak to any body; aſked them if they had not a deſire to know each other, and if they were not at ſome loſs about it.---As for me, madam, ſaid the duke to the queen, I am under no uncertainty in this matter; but as the princeſs of Cleves has not the ſame reaſons to lead her to gueſs who I am, as I have to direct me to know her, I ſhould be glad if your majeſty would be pleaſed to let her know my name.---I believe, ſaid the queen-dauphin, that ſhe knows your name as well as you know her's. ---I aſſure you, madam, replied the princeſs a little embarraſſed, that I am not ſo good a gueſſer as you imagine.---Yes, you gueſs very well, anſwered the queen-dauphin; and your unwillingneſs to acknowledge that you know the duke of Nemours, without having ſeen him before, carries in it ſomething very obliging to him. The queen interrupted them, that the ball might go on; and the duke de Nemours took out the queen-dauphin. This princeſs was a perfect beauty, and ſuch ſhe appeared in the eyes of the duke de Nemours before he went to Flanders; but all this evening he could admire nothing but madam de Cleves.

The chevalier de Guiſe, whoſe idol ſhe ſtill was, ſat at her feet, and what had paſſed filled him with the utmoſt

utmoſt grief; he looked upon it as ominous for him, that Fortune had deſtined the duke of Nemours to be in love with the princeſs of Cleves. And whether there appeared in reality any concern in the princeſs's face, or whether the chevalier's jealouſy only led him to ſuſpect it, he believed that ſhe was touched with the ſight of the duke; and could not forbear telling her, that monſieur de Nemours was very happy to commence an acquaintance with her, by an incident which had ſomething very galant and extraordinary in it.

Madam de Cleves returned home with her thoughts full of what had paſſed at the ball; and though it was very late, ſhe went into her mother's room to give her a relation of it; in doing which ſhe praiſed the duke of Nemours with a certain air, that gave madam de Chartres the ſame ſuſpicion the chevalier de Guiſe had entertained before.

The day following, the ceremony of the duke of Loraine's marriage was performed; and there the princeſs of Cleves obſerved ſo inimitable a grace, and ſo fine a mien in the duke of Nemours, that ſhe was yet more ſurpriſed.

She afterwards ſaw him at the court of the queen-dauphin; ſhe ſaw him play at tennis with the king; ſhe ſaw him run the ring; ſhe heard him diſcourſe; ſtill ſhe found he far excelled every body elſe, and drew the attention of the company to him where-ever he was; in ſhort, the gracefulneſs of his perſon, and the agreeableneſs of his wit ſoon made a conſiderable impreſſion on her heart.

The duke de Nemours had an inclination no leſs violent for her; and hence flowed all that gaiety and ſweetneſs of behaviour, which the firſt deſires of pleaſing ordinarily inſpire a man with: hence he became more amiable than ever he was before; ſo that by often ſeeing one another, and by ſeeing in each other whatever was moſt accompliſhed at court, it could not be, but

but that they muſt mutually receive the greateſt pleaſure from ſuch a commerce.

The ducheſs of Valentinois made one in all parties of pleaſure; and the king was ſtill as paſſionately fond of her as in the beginning of his love. The princeſs of Cleves being at thoſe years, wherein people think a woman is incapable of inciting love after the age of twenty-five, beheld with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment the king's paſſion for the ducheſs, who was a grandmother, and had lately married her granddaughter: ſhe often ſpoke on this ſubject to madam de Chartres. Is it poſſible, madam, ſaid ſhe, that the king ſhould ſtill continue to love? How could he take a fancy to one, who was ſo much older than himſelf, who had been his father's miſtreſs, and who, as I have heard, is ſtill ſuch to many others?---'Tis certain, anſwered madam de Chartres, it was neither the merit nor the fidelity of the ducheſs of Valentinois which gave birth to the king's paſſion, or preſerved it; and this is what he cannot be juſtified in; for if this lady had had beauty and youth ſuitable to her birth, and the merit of having had no other lover; if ſhe had been exactly true and faithful to the king; if ſhe had loved him with reſpect only to his perſon, without the intereſted views of greatneſs and fortune, and without uſing her power but for honourable purpoſes and for his majeſty's intereſt; in this caſe, it muſt be confeſſed, one could have hardly forbore praiſing his paſſion for her. If I was not afraid, continued madam de Chartres, that you would ſay of me what is ſaid of moſt women of my years, that they love to recount the hiſtory of their own times, I would inform you how the king's paſſion for this lady began, and of ſeveral particulars of the court of the late king, which have a great relation to things that are acted at preſent.---Far from blaming you, replied the princeſs of Cleves, for repeating the hiſtories of paſt times, I lament, madam, that you have not inſtructed me in thoſe of the preſent, nor informed me

as to the different intereſts and parties of the court. I am ſo entirely ignorant of them, that I thought a few days ago, the conſtable was very well with the queen. ---You was extremely miſtaken, anſwered madam de Chartres; the queen hates the conſtable, and if ever ſhe has power, he will be but too ſenſible of it; ſhe knows he has often told the king, that of all his children none reſembled him but his natural ones.---I ſhould never have ſuſpected this hatred, ſaid the princeſs of Cleves, after having ſeen her aſſiduity in writing to the conſtable during his impriſonment, the joy ſhe expreſſed at his return, and how ſhe always calls him Compere, as well as the king.---If you judge from appearances in a court, replied madam de Chartres, you will often be deceived; truth and appearances ſeldom go together.

But to return to the ducheſs of Valentinois; you know her name is Diana de Poitiers, her family is very illuſtrious, ſhe is deſcended from the ancient dukes of Aquitaine, her grandmother was a natural daughter of Lewis the XIth, and in ſhort ſhe poſſeſſes every thing that is great in reſpect to birth. St. Valier, her father, had the unhappineſs to be involved in the affair of the conſtable of Bourbon, which you have heard of; he was condemned to loſe his head, and accordingly was conducted to the ſcaffold: his daughter, who was extremely beautiful, and who had already charmed the late king, managed ſo well, I do not know by what means, that ſhe obtained her father's life. The pardon was brought him at the moment he was expecting the fatal blow; but the pardon availed little, for fear had ſeized him ſo deeply, that it bereft him of his ſenſes, and he died a few days after. His daughter appeared at court as the king's miſtreſs; but the Italian expedition, and the impriſonment of the preſent prince, were interruptions to his love-affair. When the late king returned from Spain, and Madame the regent went to meet him at Bayonne, ſhe brought all her maids of honour with her,

her, among whom was Mademoiſelle de Piſſelen, who was ſince ducheſs d'Etampes; the king fell in love with her, though ſhe was inferior in birth, wit and beauty to the ducheſs of Valentinois, and had no advantage above her but that of being very young. I have heard her ſay ſeveral times, that ſhe was born the ſame day Diana de Poitiers was married; but ſhe ſpoke this in the malice of her heart, and not as what ſhe knew to be true; for I am much miſtaken, if the ducheſs of Valentinois did not marry monſieur de Breze, at the ſame time that the king fell in love with madam d'Etampes. Never was a greater hatred than that between theſe two ladies; the ducheſs could not pardon madam d'Etampes for having taken from her the title of the king's miſtreſs; and madam d'Etampes was violently jealous of the ducheſs, becauſe the king ſtill kept a correſpondence with her. That prince was by no means conſtant to his miſtreſſes; there was always one among them that had the title and honours of miſtreſs, but the ladies of the ſmall band, as they were ſtiled, ſhared his favour by turns. The loſs of the dauphin, his ſon, who died at Tournon, and was thought to be poiſoned, extremely afflicted him; he had not the ſame affection and tenderneſs for his ſecond ſon, the preſent king; he imagined he did not ſee in him ſpirit and vivacity enough, and complained of it one day to the ducheſs of Valentinois, who told him, ſhe would endeavour to raiſe a paſſion in him for her, in order to make him more ſprightly and agreeable. She ſucceeded in it, as you ſee, and this paſſion is now of above twenty years duration, without being changed either by time or incidents.

The late king at firſt oppoſed it; and whether he had ſtill love enough left for the ducheſs of Valentinois to be jealous, or whether he was urged on by the ducheſs d'Etampes, who was in deſpair upon ſeeing the dauphin ſo much attached to her enemy; 'tis certain he beheld this paſſion with an indignation and reſentment, that ſhewed itſelf every day by ſomething or other. The dauphin neither valued his anger or his hatred,

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nor could any thing oblige him either to abate or conceal his flame; ſo that the king was forced to accuſtom himſelf to bear it with patience. This oppoſition of his to his father's will, withdrew his affections from him more and more, and transferred them to his third ſon, the duke of Orleans, who was a prince of a fine perſon, full of fire and ambition, and of a youthful heat which wanted to be moderated; however, he would have made a very great prince, had he arrived to a more ripened age.

The rank of eldeſt, which the dauphin held, and the king's favour which the duke of Orleans was poſſeſſed of, created between them a ſort of emulation, that grew by degrees to hatred. This emulation began from their infancy, and was ſtill kept up in its height.

The diſcord between the two brothers put madam d'Etampes upon the thought of ſtrengthening herſelf with the duke of Orleans, in order to ſupport her power with the king againſt the ducheſs of Valentinois; accordingly ſhe ſucceeded in it; and that young prince, though he felt no emotions of love for her, entered no leſs into her intereſt, than the dauphin into that of madam de Valentinois. Hence roſe two factions at court, of ſuch a nature as you may imagine; but the intrigues of them were not confined to the quarrels of women.

Some time after, the duke of Orleans died at Farmontiers of a kind of contagious diſtemper: he was in love with one of the fineſt women of the court, and was beloved by her. I will not mention her name, becauſe ſhe has ſince lived with ſo much diſcretion, and has ſo carefully concealed the paſſion ſhe had for that prince, that one ought to be tender of her reputation. It happened ſhe received the news of her huſband's death, at the ſame time as ſhe heard of the duke's, ſo that ſhe had that pretext to enable her to conceal her real ſorrow, without being at the trouble of putting any conſtraint upon herſelf.

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The king did not long ſurvive the prince his ſon; he died two years after; he recommended to the dauphin to make uſe of the cardinal de Tournon and the admiral de Annebault, but ſaid nothing at all of the conſtable, who was then in baniſhment at Chantilli. Nevertheleſs, the firſt thing the king his ſon did was to recal him, and make him his prime miniſter.

Madam d'Etampes was diſcarded, and received all the ill treatment ſhe could poſſibly expect from an enemy ſo very powerful; the ducheſs of Valentinois amply revenged herſelf both of that lady, and all thoſe who had diſobliged her; ſhe ſeemed to reign more abſolute in the king's heart, than ſhe did even when he was dauphin. During the twelve years reign of this prince ſhe has been abſolute in every thing; ſhe diſpoſes of all governments and offices of truſt and power; ſhe has diſgraced the cardinal de Tournon, the chancellor, and Villeroy; thoſe who have endeavoured to open the king's mind with reſpect to her conduct, have been undone in the attempt; the count de Taix, great maſter of the ordnance, who had no kindneſs for her, could not forbear ſpeaking of her galantries, and particularly of that with the count de Briſſac, of whom the king was already very jealous. Nevertheleſs ſhe contrived things ſo well, that the count de Taix was diſgraced, and his employment taken from him; and what is almoſt incredible, ſhe procured it to be given to the count de Briſſac, and afterwards made him a mareſchal of France. Notwithſtanding, the king's jealouſy encreaſed to ſuch a height, that he could no longer ſuffer him to continue at court: this paſſion of jealouſy, which is fierce and violent in other men, is gentle and moderate in him through the great reſpect he has for his miſtreſs, and therefore he did not go about to remove his rival, but under the pretext of giving him the government of Piemont. He has lived there ſeveral years; laſt winter he returned to Paris, under pretence of demanding troops and other neceſſaries for the army he commands; the deſire of ſeeing the ducheſs of Valen-

tinois again, and the fear of being forgotten by her, was perhaps the principal motive of this journey. The king received him very coldly; meſſieurs de Guiſe, who have no kindneſs for him, but dare not ſhew it on account of the ducheſs, made uſe of monſieur the viſcount, her declared enemy, to prevent his obtaining what he came to demand. It was no difficult matter to do him hurt. The king hated him, and was uneaſy at his preſence; ſo that he was obliged to return to Piemont without any benefit from his journey, except, perhaps, that of rekindling in the heart of the ducheſs the flame which abſence began to extinguiſh. The king has had a great many other ſubjects of jealouſy, but either he has not been informed of them, or has not dared to complain of them.

I do not know, daughter, added madam de Chartres, if I have not already told you more of theſe things than you deſired to know.---I am far, madam, from complaining of that, replied the princeſs of Cleves, and if it was not for fear of being importunate, I ſhould yet deſire to be informed of ſeveral circumſtances I am ignorant of.

The duke de Nemours's paſſion for madam de Cleves was at firſt ſo violent, that he had no reliſh left for any of the ladies he paid his addreſſes to before, and with whom he kept a correſpondence during his abſence; he even loſt all remembrance of his engagements with them, and not only made it his buſineſs to find excuſes to break with them, but had not the patience to hear their complaints, or make any anſwer to the reproaches they laid upon him. The queen-dauphin herſelf, for whom his regards had been very tender, could no longer preſerve a place in that heart which was now devoted to the princeſs of Cleves. His impatience of making a tour to England began to abate, and he ſhewed no earneſtneſs in haſtening his equipage. He frequently went to the queen-dauphin's court, becauſe the princeſs of Cleves was often there, and he was very eaſy in leaving people in the opinion they had of his

paſſion

paſſion for that queen; he put ſo great a value on madam de Cleves, that he reſolved to be rather wanting in giving proofs of his love, than to hazard its being publickly known; he did not ſo much as ſpeak of it to the viſcount de Chartres, who was his intimate friend, and from whom he concealed nothing; the truth is, he conducted this affair with ſo much diſcretion, that nobody ſuſpected he was in love with madam de Cleves, except the chevalier de Guiſe; and ſhe would ſcarcely have perceived it herſelf, if the inclination ſhe had for him had not led her into a particular attention to all his actions, by which ſhe was convinced of it.

She no longer continued to have the ſame diſpoſition, to communicate to her mother what ſhe thought concerning the duke de Nemours, as ſhe had to talk to her about her other lovers; though ſhe had no ſettled deſign of concealing it from her, yet ſhe did not ſpeak of it. Madam de Chartres, however, plainly perceived the duke's attachment to her daughter, as well as her daughter's inclination for him: the knowledge of this could n but ſenſibly afflict her, nor could ſhe be ignorant of he danger this young lady was in, in being beloved by, and loving ſo accompliſhed a perſon as the duke de Nemours: ſhe was entirely confirmed in the ſuſpicion ſhe had of this buſineſs, by an incident which fell out a few days after.

The mareſchal de St. André, who took all opportunities to ſhew his magnificence, deſired the king, under pretence of ſhewing him his houſe which was juſt finiſhed, to do him the honour to ſup there with the two queens. The mareſchal was alſo very glad to diſplay, in the ſight of the princeſs of Cleves, that ſplendid and expenſive manner of life, which he carried to ſo great a profuſion.

Some days before that appointed for the entertainment, the dauphin, who had an ill ſtate of health, found himſelf indiſpoſed, and ſaw nobody; the queen-dauphin had ſpent all that day with him; and in the

evening, upon his growing better, all the perſons of quality that were in the anti-chamber were admitted; the queen-dauphin returned to her own apartment, where ſhe found madam de Cleves and ſome other ladies, with whom ſhe lived in familiarity.

It being already very late, and not being dreſſed, ſhe did not wait upon the queen, but gave out that ſhe was not to be ſeen, and ordered her jewels to be brought, in order to chuſe out ſome for the mareſchal de St. André's ball, and preſent the princeſs of Cleves with ſome, as ſhe had promiſed her. While they were thus employed, the prince of Conde entered; his great quality gave him free acceſs every where. Doubtleſs, ſaid the queen-dauphin, you come from my huſband's apartment: What are they doing there?---Madam, ſaid he, they are maintaining a diſpute againſt the duke of Nemours, and he defends the argument he undertook with ſo much warmth, that he muſt needs be very much intereſted in it; I believe he has ſome miſtreſs that gives him uneaſineſs by going to balls, as he declares that it is a vexatious thing to a lover to ſee the perſon he loves in thoſe places.

How, replied the queen-dauphin, would not the duke de Nemours have his miſtreſs go to a ball? I thought that huſbands might wiſh their wives would not go there; but as for lovers, I never imagined they were of that opinion.---The duke de Nemours finds, anſwered the prince of Conde, that nothing is ſo inſupportable to lovers as balls, whether they are beloved again, or whether they are or not. He ſays, if they are beloved, they have the chagrin to be loved the leſs on this account for ſeveral days; that there is no woman, whom her anxiety for dreſs does not divert from thinking on her lover; that they are entirely taken up with that one circumſtance; that this care to adorn themſelves is for the whole world, as well as for the man they favour; that when they are at a ball, they are deſirous to pleaſe all who look at them; and that when they triumph in their beauty, they experience a

joy to which their lovers very little contribute. He argues further, that if one is not beloved, 'tis a yet greater torment to ſee one's miſtreſs at an aſſembly; that the more ſhe is admired by the public, the more unhappy one is not to be beloved; and that the lover is in continual fear leſt her beauty ſhould raiſe a more ſucceſsful paſſion than his own; laſtly, he finds, there is no torment equal to that of ſeeing one's miſtreſs at a ball, unleſs it be to know that ſhe is there, and not to be there one's ſelf.

Madam de Cleves pretended not to hear what the prince of Conde ſaid, though ſhe liſtened very attentively; ſhe eaſily ſaw what part ſhe had in the duke of Nemours's opinion, and particularly as to what he ſaid of the uneaſineſs of not being at a ball where his miſtreſs was, becauſe he was not to be at that of the mareſchal de St. Andre, the king having ſent him to meet the duke of Ferrara.

The queen-dauphin and the prince of Conde not going into the duke's opinion, were very merry upon the ſubject. There is but one occaſion, madam, ſaid the prince to her, in which the duke will conſent his miſtreſs ſhould go to a ball, and that is when he himſelf gives it. He ſays, that when he gave your majeſty one laſt year, his miſtreſs was ſo kind as to come to it, though ſeemingly only to attend you; that it is always a favour done to a lover, to partake of an entertainment which he gives; that it is an agreeable circumſtance for him to have his miſtreſs ſee him preſide in a place where the whole court is, and ſee him acquit himſelf well in doing the honours of it.---The duke de Nemours was in the right, ſaid the queen-dauphin ſmiling, to approve of his miſtreſs's being at his own ball; there was then ſo great a number of ladies, whom he honoured with the diſtinction of that name, that if they had not come, the aſſembly would have been very thin.

The prince of Conde had no ſooner begun to relate the duke de Nemour's ſentiments concerning aſſemblies, but madam de Cleves felt in herſelf a ſtrong averſion

to go to that of the mareſchal de St. André: ſhe eaſily came into the opinion, that a woman ought not to be at an entertainment given by one that profeſſed love to her, and ſhe was very glad to find out a reaſon of reſervedneſs, for doing a thing which would oblige the duke of Nemours. However, ſhe carried away with her the ornaments which the queen-dauphin had given her; but when ſhe ſhewed them her mother, ſhe told her that ſhe did not deſign to make uſe of them; that the mareſchal de St. André took a great deal of pains to ſhew his attachment to her, and ſhe did not doubt he would be glad to have it believed that a compliment was deſigned her in the entertainment he gave the king; and that under the pretence of doing the honours of his houſe, he would ſhew her civilities which would be uneaſy to her.

Madam de Chartres for ſome time oppoſed her daughter's [illegible], as thinking it very ſingular; but when ſhe ſaw ſhe was obſtinate in it, ſhe gave way, and told her, that in that caſe ſhe ought to pretend an indiſpoſition as an excuſe for not going to the ball, becauſe the real reaſons which hindred her would not be approved of; and care ought to be taken that they ſhould not be ſuſpected. Madam de Cleves voluntarily conſented to paſs ſome days at her mother's, in order not to go to any place where the duke of Nemours was not to be. However, the duke ſet out, without the pleaſure of knowing ſhe would not be at the ball.

The day after the ball he returned, and was informed that ſhe was not there; but as he did not know the converſation he had at the dauphin's court had been repeated to her, he was far from thinking himſelf happy enough to have been the reaſon of her not going.

The day after, while he was at the queen's apartments, and talking to the queen-dauphin, madam de Chartres and madam de Cleves came in. Madam de Cleves was dreſſed a little negligently, as a perſon who had been indiſpoſed, but her countenance did not at all correſpond with her dreſs.---You look ſo pretty, ſays the

the queen-dauphin to her, that I can't believe you have been ill; I think the prince of Conde, when he told us the duke de Nemours's opinion of the ball, perſuaded you, that to go there would be doing a favour to the mareſchal de St. André, and that is the reaſon which hindered you from going. Madam de Cleves bluſhed, both becauſe the queen-dauphin had conjectured right, and becauſe ſhe ſpoke her conjecture in the preſence of the duke de Nemours.

Madam de Chartres immediately perceived the true reaſon why her daughter refuſed to go to the ball; and to prevent the duke de Nemours's diſcovering it, as well as herſelf, ſhe took up the diſcourſe after a manner that gave what ſhe ſaid an air of truth.---I aſſure you, madam, ſaid ſhe to the queen-dauphin, that your majeſty has done my daughter more honour than ſhe deſerves; ſhe was really indiſpoſed, but I believe, if I had not hindred her, ſhe would not have failed to wait on you, and to ſhew herſelf under any diſadvantages, for the pleaſure of ſeeing what there was extraordinary at yeſterday's entertainment. The queen-dauphin gave credit to what madam de Chartres ſaid; but the duke de Nemours was ſorry to find ſo much probability in it: nevertheleſs, the bluſhes of the princeſs of Cleves made him ſuſpect, that what the queen-dauphin had ſaid was not altogether falſe. The princeſs of Cleves at firſt was concerned the duke had any room to believe it was he who had hindred her from going to the mareſchal de St. André; but afterwards, ſhe was a little chagrined that her mother had entirely taken off the ſuſpicion of it.

Madam de Chartres was not willing to let her daughter ſee that ſhe knew her ſentiments for the duke, for fear of making herſelf ſuſpected in ſome things which ſhe was very deſirous to tell her. One day ſhe ſet herſelf to talk about him, and a great deal of good ſhe ſaid of him; but mixed with it abundance of ſham praiſes, as the prudence he ſhewed in never falling in love, and how wiſe he was to make the affair of women and love an amuſement, inſtead of a ſerious

buſineſs. It is not, added ſhe, that he is not ſuſpected to have a very uncommon paſſion for the queen-dauphin; I obſerve he viſits her very often; and I adviſe you to avoid, as much as poſſible, ſpeaking to him, and eſpecially in private; becauſe, ſince the queen-dauphin treats you as ſhe does, it would be ſaid, that you are their confidante; and you know how diſagreeable that ſort of reputation is: I am of opinion, if this report continues, that you ſhould not viſit the queen-dauphin ſo often, in order to avoid involving yourſelf in adventures of gallantry.

The princeſs of Cleves had never heard before of the amour between the duke de Nemours and the queen-dauphin; ſhe was ſo much ſurpriſed at what her mother had told her, and ſeemed to ſee ſo plainly how ſhe had been miſtaken in her thoughts about the duke, that ſhe changed countenance. Madam de Chartres perceived it. Viſitors came in that moment; and the princeſs of Cleves retired to her own apartment, and ſhut herſelf up in her cloſet.

One can't expreſs the grief ſhe felt, to diſcover, by what her mother had been juſt ſaying, the intereſt her heart had in the duke de Nemours; ſhe had not dared as yet to acknowledge it to her ſecret thoughts; ſhe then found, that the ſentiments ſhe had for him were ſuch as the prince of Cleves had required of her; ſhe perceived how ſhameful it was to entertain them for another, and not for a huſband that deſerved them; ſhe found herſelf under the utmoſt embarraſſment, and was dreadfully afraid leſt the duke ſhould make uſe of her only as a means to come at the queen-dauphin; and it was this thought determined her to impart to her mother ſomething ſhe had not yet told her.

The next morning ſhe went into her mother's chamber to put her reſolves in execution, but ſhe found madam de Chartres had ſome touches of a fever, and therefore did not think proper to ſpeak to her: this indiſpoſition, however, appeared ſo inſignificant, that madam de Cleves

Cleves made no ſcruple after dinner to viſit the queen-dauphin; ſhe was in her cloſet with two or three ladies of her moſt familiar acquaintance. We were ſpeaking, ſaid ſhe to her, as ſoon as ſhe ſaw her, of the duke de Nemours, and were admiring how much he is changed ſince his return from Bruſſels; before he went there, he had an infinite number of miſtreſſes; and it was his own fault, for he ſhewed an equal regard to thoſe who had merit, and to thoſe who had none; ſince his return, he neither knows the one nor the other; there never was ſo great a change; I find his humour is changed too, and that he is leſs gay than he uſed to be.

The princeſs of Cleves made no anſwer; and it ſhocked her to think ſhe ſhould have taken all that they ſaid of the change in the duke for proofs of his paſſion for her, had ſhe not been undeceived; ſhe felt in herſelf ſome little reſentment againſt the queen-dauphin, for endeavouring to find out reaſons, and ſeeming ſurpriſed at a thing, which ſhe probably knew more of than any one elſe: ſhe could not forbear ſhewing ſomething of it; and when the other ladies withdrew, ſhe came up and told her in a low voice---And is it I, madam, you have been pointing at? and have you a mind to conceal, that you are ſhe who has made ſuch an alteration in the conduct of the duke of Nemours? ---You do me injuſtice, anſwered the queen-dauphin; you know I conceal nothing from you; it is true, the duke of Nemours, before he went to Bruſſels, had, I believe, an intention to let me know he did not hate me; but ſince his return, it has not ſo much as appeared that he remembers any thing of what he has done; and I acknowledge I have a curioſity to know what it is has changed him ſo. It would not be very difficult for me to unravel this affair, added ſhe; the viſcount de Chartres, his intimate friend, is in love with a lady with whom I have ſome power, and I will know by that means the occaſion of this alteration.--- The queen-dauphin ſpoke with an air of ſincerity, which

convinced the princeſs of Cleves, and in ſpite of herſelf ſhe found her mind in a more calm and pleaſing ſituation than it had been in before.

When ſhe returned to her mother, ſhe heard ſhe was a great deal worſe than ſhe had left her; her fever was redoubled, and the days following it increaſed to ſo great a degree, that ſhe was thought to be in danger. Madam de Cleves was in extreme grief on this occaſion, and never ſtirred out of her mother's chamber. The prince of Cleves was there too almoſt every day, and all day long, partly out of affection to madam de Chartres, and partly to hinder his lady from abandoning herſelf to ſorrow; but chiefly that he might have the pleaſure of ſeeing her, his paſſion not being at all diminiſhed.

The duke de Nemours, who had always had a great friendſhip for the prince of Cleves, had not failed to ſhew it ſince his return from Bruſſels; during the illneſs of madam de Chartres he frequently found means to ſee the princeſs of Cleves, pretending to want her huſband, or to come to take him out to walk; he enquired for him at ſuch hours as he knew very well he was not at home, and under pretence of waiting for him ſtay'd in madam de Cleves's antichamber, where there were always a great many people of quality: madam de Cleves often came there, and her grief did not make her ſeem leſs handſome in the eyes of the duke de Nemours; he made her ſenſible what intereſt he had in her affliction, and ſpoke to her with ſo ſubmiſſive an air, that he eaſily convinced her, that the queen-dauphin was not the perſon he was in love with.

The ſeeing him at once gave her grief and pleaſure; but when ſhe no longer ſaw him, and reflected that the charm he carried about him when preſent was an introduction to love, ſhe was very near imagining ſhe hated him, out of the exceſſive grief which that thought gave her.

Madam de Chartres ſtill grew worſe and worſe, ſo that they began to deſpair of her life; ſhe heard what the

the phyſicians told her concerning the danger ſhe was in, with a courage worthy her virtue and her piety. After they were gone, ſhe cauſed every body to retire, and ſent for madam de Cleves.

We muſt part, my dear daughter, ſaid ſhe, ſtretching out her hand to her; the danger I leave you in, and the occaſion you have for me, adds to the regret I have to leave you. You have a paſſion for the duke de Nemours; I do not deſire you to confeſs it; I am no longer in a condition to make uſe of that ſincerity for your good. I have perceived this inclination a great while, but was not willing to ſpeak to you of it at firſt, for fear of making you diſcover it yourſelf; you know it at preſent but too well; you are upon the brink of a precipice; great efforts muſt be uſed, and you muſt do great violence to your heart to ſave yourſelf: reflect what you owe to your huſband; reflect what you owe to yourſelf; and think that you are going to loſe that reputation which you have gained, and which I have ſo much at heart; call up, my dear daughter, all your courage and conſtancy; retire from court; oblige your huſband to carry you away; do not be afraid of taking ſuch reſolutions, as being too harſh and difficult; however frightful they may appear at firſt, they will become more pleaſant in time than the misfortunes that follow galantry. If any other motives than thoſe of duty and virtue could have weight with you, I ſhould tell you, that if any thing were capable of diſturbing the happineſs I hope for in the next world, it would be to ſee you fall like other women; but if this calamity muſt neceſſarily happen, I ſhall meet death with joy, as it will hinder me from being a witneſs of it.

Madam de Cleves bathed with tears her mother's hand, which ſhe held faſt locked in her own; nor was madam de Chartres leſs moved. Adieu! dear daughter, ſaid ſhe, let us put an end to a converſation which melts us both; and remember, if you are able, all that I have been ſaying to you.

When ſhe had ſpoke this, ſhe turned herſelf on the other ſide, and ordered her daughter to call her women, being unwilling either to hear her reply, or to ſpeak any more. Madam de Cleves went out of her preſence in a condition one need not deſcribe; and madam de Chartres thought of nothing but preparing herſelf for death. She lived two days longer, during which ſhe would not ſee her daughter again; her daughter was the only thing ſhe had reluctance to part with.

Madam de Cleves was in the utmoſt affliction; her huſband did not leave her; and no ſooner was her mother expired, but he carried her into the country, that ſhe might not have in her eye a place which could ſerve only to ſharpen her ſorrow, which was ſcarce to be equalled. Though tenderneſs and gratitude had the greateſt ſhare in her griefs, yet the need which ſhe found ſhe had of her mother to guard her againſt the duke of Nemours, added no ſmall weight to them; ſhe found ſhe was unhappy in being left to herſelf, at a time when ſhe was ſo little miſtreſs of her own affections, and when ſhe ſo much wiſhed for ſomebody to pity and encourage her. The prince of Cleves's behaviour to her on this occaſion, made her wiſh more ardently than ever, never to fail in her duty to him; ſhe alſo expreſſed more friendſhip and affection for him than ſhe had done before; ſhe would not ſuffer him to leave her, and ſhe ſeemed to think that his being conſtantly with her could defend her againſt the duke of Nemours.

The duke came to ſee the prince of Cleves in the country; he did what he could to pay a viſit alſo to madam de Cleves, but ſhe refuſed to receive him; and being perſuaded ſhe could not help finding ſomething dangerouſly lovely in him, ſhe made a ſtrongre ſolution to forbear ſeeing him, and to avoid all occaſions of it that were in her power.

The prince of Cleves went to Paris to make his court, and promiſed his lady to return the next day; but however, he did not return till the day after. I expected

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you yeſterday, ſaid madam de Cleves to him on his arrival, and I ought to chide you for not having come as you promiſed; you know, if I was capable of feeling a new affliction in the condition I am in, it would be the death of madam de Tournon, and I have heard of it this morning; I ſhould have been concerned, though I had not known her; 'tis a melancholy conſideration to think that a lady, ſo young and handſome as ſhe, ſhould be dead in two days; but beſides, ſhe was the perſon in the world that pleaſed me moſt, and who appeared to have diſcretion equal to her beauty.

I am ſorry I could not return yeſterday, replied the prince of Cleves, but my preſence was ſo neceſſary to the conſolation of an unhappy man, that it was impoſſible for me to leave him. As for madam de Tournon, I adviſe you not to be concerned for her, if you lament her as a woman full of diſcretion, and worthy of your eſteem.---You ſurprize me, anſwered madam de Cleves; I have heard you ſay ſeveral times, that there was not a lady at court you had a greater reſpect for.---It is true, replied he; but women are incomprehenſible; and when I have ſeen them all, I think myſelf ſo happy in having you, that I cannot enough admire my good fortune.---You eſteem me more than I deſerve, anſwered madam de Cleves: you have not had experience enough yet to pronounce me worthy of you; but tell me, I beſeech you, what it is has undeceived you with reſpect to madam de Tournon.---I have been undeceived a great while, replied he; I know that ſhe was in love with the count de Sancerre, and that ſhe gave him room to hope ſhe would marry him.---I can't believe, ſaid madam de Cleves, that madam de Tournon, after ſo extraordinary an averſion as ſhe has ſhewn to marriage from the time ſhe became a widow, and after the public declarations ſhe has made that ſhe would never marry again, ſhould gives hopes to Sancerre.---If ſhe had given hopes to him

him only, replied the prince of Cleves, the wonder had not been ſo great; but what is ſurpriſing is, that ſhe gave hopes likewiſe to Etouteville at the ſame time: I'll let you know the whole hiſtory of this matter.

PART II.

YOU know the friendſhip there is betwixt Sancerre and me. Nevertheleſs, about two years ago, he fell in love with madam de Tournon, and concealed it from me with as much care as from the reſt of the world; I had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of it. Madam de Tournon as yet appeared inconſolable for the death of her huſband, and lived in retirement with great auſterity. Sancerre's ſiſter was in a manner the only perſon ſhe ſaw, and it was at her lodgings he became in love with her.

One evening there was to be a play at the Louvre, and the actors only waited for the coming of the king and madam de Valentinois; when word was brought that ſhe was indiſpoſed, and that the king would not come. It was eaſy to ſee that the ducheſs's indiſpoſition was nothing but ſome quarrel with the king; every one knew the jealouſy he had had of the mareſchal de Briſac during his continuance at court; but he had been ſet out ſome days on his return to Piemont, and one could not imagine what was the occaſion of this falling out.

While I was ſpeaking of this to Sancerre, monſieur d'Anville came into the room, and told me in a whiſper, that the king was ſo exaſperated, and ſo afflicted at the ſame time, that one would pity him; that upon a late reconciliation between him and the ducheſs, after the quarrel

quarrel they had had about the mareſchal de Briſac, he had given her a ring, and deſired her to wear it; and that as ſhe was dreſſing herſelf to come to the play, he had miſſed it off her finger, and aſked what was become of it; upon which ſhe ſeemed in ſurprize that ſhe had it not, and called to her woman for it; who unfortunately, or for want of being better inſtructed, made anſwer, they had not ſeen it four or five days.

It was, continued monſieur d'Anville, preciſely ſo long ſince the Mareſchal de Briſac left the court, and the king made no doubt but ſhe gave him the ring when ſhe took her leave of him. The thought of this awaked, in ſo lively a manner, that jealouſy which was not yet extinguiſhed, that he fell into uncommon tranſports, and loaded her with a thouſand reproaches; he is juſt gone into her apartment again in a great concern; but whether the reaſon is a more confirmed opinion that the ducheſs had made a ſacrifice of the ring, or for fear of having diſobliged her by his anger, I can't tell.

As ſoon as monſieur d'Anville had told me this news, I acquainted Sancerre with it; I told it him as a ſecret newly entruſted with me, and charged him to ſay nothing of it.

The next day I went early in the morning to my ſiſter-in-law's, and found madam de Tournon at her bed-ſide, who had no great kindneſs for the ducheſs of Valentinois, and knew very well that my ſiſter-in-law had no reaſon to be ſatisfied with her. Sancerre had been with her, after he went from the play, and had acquainted her with the quarrel between the king and the ducheſs; and madam de Tournon was come to tell it to my ſiſter-in-law, without knowing or ſuſpecting that it was I from whom her lover had it.

As ſoon as I advanced towards my ſiſter-in-law, ſhe told madam de Tournon, that they might truſt me with what ſhe had been telling her; and without waiting madam de Tournon's leave, ſhe related to me, word by word, all I had told Sancerre the night before. You may

may judge what ſurprize I was in; I looked hard at madam de Tournon, and ſhe ſeemed diſordered; her diſorder gave me a ſuſpicion. I had told the thing to nobody but Sancerre; he left me when the comedy was done, without giving any reaſon for it; I remember to have heard him ſpeak much in praiſe of madam de Tournon; all theſe things opened my eyes, and I eaſily diſcerned there was an intrigue between them, and that he had ſeen her ſince he left me.

I was ſo ſtung to find he had concealed this adventure from me, that I ſaid ſeveral things which made madam de Tournon ſenſible of the imprudence ſhe had been guilty of. I led her back to her coach, and aſſured her, I envied the happineſs of him who informed her of the king's quarrel with the ducheſs of Valentinois.

I went immediately in ſearch of Sancerre, and ſeverely reproached him; I told him I knew of his paſſion for madam de Tournon, without ſaying how I came by the diſcovery; he was forced to acknowledge it. I afterwards informed him what led me into the knowledge of it; and he acquainted me with the detail of the whole affair. He told me, that though he was a younger brother, and far from being able to pretend to ſo good a match, nevertheleſs ſhe was determined to marry him. I can't expreſs the ſurpriſe I was in; I told Sancerre he would do well to haſten the concluſion of the marriage, and that there was nothing he had not to fear from a woman, who had the artifice to ſupport, in the eye of the public, appearances ſo diſtant from truth. He gave me in anſwer, that ſhe was really concerned for the loſs of her huſband, but that the inclination ſhe had for him had ſurmounted that affliction, and that ſhe could not help diſcovering all on a ſudden ſo great a change. He mentioned beſides ſeveral other reaſons in her excuſe, which convinced me how much he was in love; he aſſured me, he would bring her to conſent that I ſhould know his paſſion for her, eſpecially ſince it was ſhe herſelf who had made me ſuſpect it;

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in a word, he did oblige her to it, though with a great deal of difficulty, and I grew afterwards very deep in their confidence.

I never knew a lady behave herſelf in ſo agreeable a manner to her lover, but yet I was always ſhocked at the affectation ſhe ſhewed in appearing ſo concerned for the loſs of her huſband. Sancerre was ſo much in love, and ſo well pleaſed with the treatment he received from her, that he ſcarce durſt preſs her to conclude the marriage, for fear ſhe ſhould think he defired it rather out of intereſt than love; however, he ſpoke to her of it, and ſhe ſeemed fully bent on marrying him; ſhe began alſo to abandon her reſerved manner of life, and to appear again in public; ſhe viſited my ſiſter-in-law at hours when ſome of the court were uſually there; Sancerre came there but ſeldom, but thoſe who came every night, and frequently ſaw her there, thought her extremely beautiful.

She had not long quitted her ſolitude, when Sancerre imagined that her paſſion for him was cooled; he ſpoke of it ſeveral times to me; but I laid no great ſtreſs on the matter: but at laſt, when he told me, that inſtead of forwarding the marriage, ſhe ſeemed to put it off, I began to think he was not to blame for being uneaſy: I remonſtrated to him, that if madam de Tournon's paſſion was abated after having continued two years, he ought not to be ſurpriſed at it; and that even ſuppoſing it was not abated, poſſibly it might not be ſtrong enough to induce her to marry him; that he ought not to complain of it; that ſuch a marriage in the judgment of the public would draw cenſures upon her, not only becauſe he was not a ſuitable match for her, but alſo on account of the prejudice it would do her reputation; that therefore all he could deſire was, that ſhe might not deceive him, nor lead him into falſe expectations. I told him further, that if ſhe had not reſolution enough to marry him, or if ſhe confeſſed ſhe liked ſome other perſon better, he ought not to reſent

or

or be angry at it, but ſtill continue his eſteem and regard for her.

I give you, ſaid I, the advice which I would take myſelf; for ſincerity has ſuch charms to me, that I believe if my miſtreſs, or even my wife, ingenuouſly confeſſed ſhe had a greater affection for another than for me, I might be troubled, but not exaſperated; I would lay aſide the character of a lover or a huſband, to beſtow my advice and my pity.

This diſcourſe made madam de Cleves bluſh; and ſhe found in it a certain ſimilitude of her own condition, which very much ſurprized her, and gave her a concern, from which ſhe could not recover in a great while.

Sancerre ſpoke to madam de Tournon, continued monſieur de Cleves, and told her all I had adviſed him; but ſhe encouraged him with ſo many freſh aſſurances, and ſeemed ſo diſpleaſed at his ſuſpicions, that ſhe entirely removed them; nevertheleſs, ſhe deferred the marriage until after a pretty long journey he was to make; but ſhe behaved herſelf ſo well until his departure, and appeared ſo concerned at it, that I believed as well as he, that ſhe ſincerely loved him. He ſet out about three months ago; during his abſence I have ſeldom ſeen madam de Tournon; you have entirely taken me up, and I only knew that he was ſpeedily expected.

The day before yeſterday, on my arrival at Paris, I heard ſhe was dead; I ſent to his lodgings to enquire if they had any news of him, and word was brought me, he came to town the night before, which was preciſely the day that madam de Tournon died; I immediately went to ſee him, concluding in what condition I ſhould find him; but his affliction far ſurpaſſed what I had imagined.

Never did I ſee a ſorrow ſo deep and ſo tender; the moment he ſaw me he embraced me with tears; I ſhall never ſee her more, ſaid he, I ſhall never ſee her more; ſhe is dead, I was not worthy of her; but I ſhall ſoon follow her.

After

After this he was ſilent; and then, from time to time, continually repeating, She is dead, I ſhall never ſee her more, he returned to lamentations and tears, and continued as a man bereft of reaſon. He told me, he had not often received letters from her during his abſence, but that he knew her too well to be ſurprized at it, and was ſenſible how ſhy and timorous ſhe was of writing; he made no doubt but ſhe would have married him upon his return; he conſidered her as the moſt amiable and conſtant of her ſex; he thought himſelf tenderly beloved by her; he loſt her the moment he expected to be united to her for ever; all theſe thoughts threw him into ſo violent an affliction, that I own I was deeply touched with it.

Nevertheleſs I was obliged to leave him to go to the King, but promiſed to return immediately; accordingly I did, and I was never ſo ſurprized as I was to find him entirely changed from what I had left him; he was ſtanding in his chamber, his face full of fury, ſometimes walking, ſometimes ſtopping ſhort, as if he had been diſtracted. Come, ſays he, and ſee the moſt forlorn wretch in the world; I am a thouſand times more unhappy than I was a while ago, and what I have juſt heard of madam de Tournon is worſe than her death.

I took what he ſaid to be wholly the effect of grief, and could not imagine that there could be any thing worſe than the death of a miſtreſs one loves, and is beloved by; I told him, that ſo far as he kept his grief within bounds, I approved of it, and bore a part in it; but that I ſhould no longer pity him, if he abandoned himſelf to deſpair, and flew from reaſon. I ſhould be too happy if I had loſt both my reaſon and my life, cried he; madam de Tournon was falſe to me, and I am informed of her unfaithfulneſs and treachery the very day after I was informed of her death; I am informed of it at a time when my ſoul is filled with the moſt tender love, and pierced with the ſharpeſt grief that ever was; at a time, when the idea of her in my heart

heart is that of the moſt perfect woman who ever lived, and the moſt perfect with reſpect to me; I find I am miſtaken, and that ſhe does not deſerve to be lamented by me; nevertheleſs, I have the ſame concern for her death, as if ſhe had been true to me; and I have the ſame ſenſibility of her falſhood, as if ſhe were yet living; had I heard of her falſhood before her death, jealouſy, anger, and rage would have poſſeſſed me, and in ſome meaſure hardened me againſt the grief for her loſs; but now my condition is ſuch, that I am incapable of receiving comfort, and yet know not how to hate her.

You may judge of the ſurprize I was in at what Sancerre told me; I aſked him how he came by the knowledge of it; and he told me, that the minute I went away from him, Etouteville, who is his intimate friend, but who nevertheleſs knew nothing of his love for madam de Tournon, came to ſee him; that as ſoon as he was ſat down, he fell a-weeping, and aſked his pardon for having concealed from him what he was going to tell him; that he begged him to have compaſſion of him, that he was come to open his heart to him, and that he was the perſon in the world the moſt afflicted for the death of madam de Tournon.

That name, ſaid Sancerre, ſo aſtoniſhed me, that though my firſt intention was to tell him I was more afflicted than he, I had not the power to ſpeak: he continued to inform me, that he had been in love with her ſix months, that he was always deſirous to let me know it, but ſhe had expreſly forbid him; and in ſo authoritative a manner, that he durſt not diſobey her; that he gained her in a manner as ſoon as he courted her; that they concealed their mutual paſſion for each other from the whole world; that he never viſited her publicly; that he had the pleaſure to remove her ſorrow for her huſband's death; and that laſtly, he was to have married her at the very juncture in which ſhe died: but that this marriage, which was an effect of love, would have appeared in her an effect of duty and obedience, ſhe having

having prevailedupon her father to lay his commands on her to marry him, in order to avoid the appearance of too great an alteration in her conduct, which had ſeemed ſo averſe to a ſecond marriage.

While Etouteville was ſpeaking to me, ſaid Sancerre, I believed all he ſaid, becauſe I found ſo much probability in it, and becauſe the time when he told me his paſſion for madam de Tournon commenced, is preciſely the ſame with that when ſhe appeared changed towards me; but the next moment I thought him a liar, or at leaſt an enthuſiaſt, and was upon the point of telling him ſo. Afterwards I came into an inclination of clearing up the matter, and propoſed ſeveral queſtions, and laid my doubts before him; in a word, I proceeded ſo far to convince myſelf of my misfortune, that he aſked me if I knew madam de Tournon's hand-writing, and with that threw upon my bed four letters of her's and her picture; my brother came in that minute; Etouteville's face was ſo full of tears, that he was forced to withdraw to avoid being obſerved, and ſaid, he would come again in the evening to fetch what he left with me; and as for me, I ſent my brother away under pretence of being indiſpoſed, ſo impatient was I to ſee the letters he had left, and ſo full of hopes to find ſomething there that might make me diſbelieve what Etouteville had been telling me; but alas! what did I not find there? What tenderneſs! what oaths! what aſſurances of marriage! what letters! She never wrote the like to me. Thus, continued he, am I at once pierced with anguiſh for her death and for her falſhood, two evils which have been often compared, but never felt before by the ſame perſon at the ſame time; I confeſs, to my ſhame, that ſtill I am more grieved for her loſs than for her change; I cannot think her guilty enough, to conſent to her death: were ſhe living, I ſhould have the ſatisfaction to reproach her, and to revenge myſelf on her by making her ſenſible of her injuſtice; but I ſhall ſee her no more; I ſhall ſee her no more! This

is the greateſt misfortune of all others; would I could reſtore her to life, though with the loſs of my own! Yet what do I wiſh? If ſhe were reſtored to life, ſhe would live for Etouteville. How happy was I yeſterday, cried he, how happy! I was the moſt afflicted man in the world; but my affliction was reaſonable, and there was ſomething pleaſing in the very thought that I was inconſolable. To-day all my ſentiments are unjuſt; I pay to a feigned paſſion the tribute of my grief, which I thought I owed to a real one; I can neither hate nor love her memory; I am incapable of conſolation, and yet do not know how to grieve for her; take care, I conjure you, that I never ſee Etouteville; his very name raiſes horror in me; I know very well I have no reaſon of complaint againſt him; I was to blame in concealing from him my love for madam de Tournon; if he had known it, perhaps he would not have purſued her; perhaps ſhe would not have been falſe to me; he came to me to impart his ſorrows, and I cannot but pity him; alas! he had reaſon to love madam de Tournon, he was beloved by her, and will never ſee her more: notwithſtanding, I perceive I cannot help hating him; once more I conjure you take care I may not ſee him.

Sancerre burſt afterwards into tears, began again to regret madam de Tournon, and to ſpeak to her, as if ſhe were preſent, and ſay the ſofteſt things in the world; from theſe tranſports he paſſed to hatred, to complaints, to reproaches and imprecations againſt her. When I ſaw him in ſo deſperate a condition, I found I ſhould want ſomebody to aſſiſt me in appeaſing his mind; accordingly I ſent for his brother, whom I had left with the king; I met him in the anti-chamber, and acquainted him with Sancerre's condition: we gave the neceſſary orders to prevent his ſeeing Etouteville, and employed part of the night in endeavouring to make him capable of reaſon; this morning I found him yet more afflicted; his brother continued with him, and I returned to you.

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It is impoſſible to be more ſurpriſed than I am, ſaid madam de Cleves; I thought madam de Tournon equally incapable of love and falſhood. Addreſs and diſſimulation, replied monſieur de Cleves, cannot go further than ſhe carried them; obſerve, that when Sancerre thought her love to him was abated, it really was, and ſhe began to love Etouteville; ſhe told the laſt, that he removed her ſorrow for her huſband's death, and that he was the cauſe of her quitting her retirement. Sancerre believed the cauſe was nothing but a reſolution ſhe had taken not to ſeem any longer to be in ſuch deep affliction; ſhe made a merit to Etouteville of concealing her correſpondence with him, and of ſeeming forced to marry him by her father's command, as if it was an effect of the care ſhe had of her reputation; whereas it was only an artifice to forſake Sancerre, without his having reaſon to reſent it. I muſt return, continued Mr. de Cleves, to ſee this unhappy man, and I believe you would do well to go to Paris too; it is time for you to appear in the world again, and receive the numerous viſits which you cannot well diſpenſe with.

Madam de Cleves agreed to the propoſal, and returned to Paris the next day; ſhe found herſelf much more eaſy with reſpect to the duke de Nemours than ſhe had been; what her mother had told her on her death-bed, and her grief for her death, created a ſort of ſuſpenſion in her mind as to her paſſion for the duke, which made her believe it was quite effaced.

The evening of her arrival the queen-dauphin made her a viſit; and after having condoled with her, told her, that in order to divert her from melancholy thoughts, ſhe would let her know all that had paſſed at court in her abſence; upon which ſhe related to her a great many extraordinary things; but what I have the greateſt deſire to inform you of, added ſhe, is, that it is certain the duke de Nemours is paſſionately in love; and that his moſt intimate friends are not only not entruſted in it, but cannot ſo much as gueſs who the perſon is he is in

love with; nevertheleſs, this paſſion of his is ſo ſtrong, as to make him neglect, or to ſpeak more properly, abandon the hopes of a crown.

What poiſon did this diſcourſe of the queen-dauphin carry in it for madam de Cleves! How could ſhe but know herſelf to be the perſon whoſe name was not known; and how could ſhe help being filled with tenderneſs and gratitude, when ſhe learned, by a way not in the leaſt liable to ſuſpicion, that the duke, who had already touched her heart, concealed his paſſion from the whole world, and neglected for her ſake the hopes of a crown? It is impoſſible to expreſs what ſhe felt, or to deſcribe the tumult that was raiſed in her ſoul. Had the queen-dauphin obſerved her cloſely, ſhe might eaſily have diſcerned, that what ſhe had been ſaying was not indifferent to her; but as ſhe had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of the truth, ſhe continued her diſcourſe without minding her: Monſieur d'Anville, added ſhe, from whom, as I juſt told you, I had all this, believes I know more of it than himſelf; and he has ſo great an opinion of my beauty, that he is ſatisfied I am the only perſon capable of creating ſo great a change in the duke of Nemours.

Theſe laſt words of the queen-dauphin gave madam de Cleves a ſort of uneaſineſs very different from that which ſhe had a few minutes before. I can eaſily come into monſieur d'Anville's opinion, anſwered ſhe; and it is very probable, madam, that nothing leſs than a princeſs of your merit could make him deſpiſe the queen of England.---I would own it to you, if I knew it, replied the queen-dauphin, and I ſhould know it if it were true; ſuch paſſions as theſe never eſcape the ſight of thoſe who occaſion them; they are the firſt to diſcern them; the duke of Nemours has never ſhewed me any thing but ſlight complaiſances; and yet I find ſo great a difference betwixt his preſent and former behaviour to me, that I can aſſure you, I am not the cauſe of the indifference he expreſſes for the crown of England.

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But I forget myself in your company, added the queen-dauphin, and do not remember that I am to wait upon Madame. Having said this, she took her leave of madam de Cleves, and the next day the king and the queens went to visit her. The duke de Nemours, who had expected her return with the utmost impatience, and languished for an opportunity of speaking to her in private, contrived to wait upon her at an hour when the company would probably be withdrawing, and nobody else come in; he succeeded in his design, and came in when the last visitors were going away.

The princess was sitting on her bed, and the hot weather, together with the sight of the duke de Nemours, gave her a blush that added to her beauty; he sat over against her with a certain timorous respect that flows from a real love; he continued some minutes without speaking; nor was she less at a loss, so that they were both silent a good while: at last, the duke condoled with her for her mother's death.---Madam de Cleves was glad to give the conversation that turn, spoke a considerable time of the great loss she had had, and at last said, that though time had taken off from the violence of her grief, yet the impression would always remain so strong, that it would entirely change her humour.---Great troubles and excessive passions, replied the duke, make great alterations in the mind; as for me, I am quite another man since my return from Flanders; abundance of people have taken notice of this change, and the queen-dauphin spoke to me of it yesterday. It is true, replied the princess, she has observed it, and I think I remember to have heard her say something about it.---I am not sorry, madam, replied the duke, that she has discerned it; but I could wish some others in particular had discerned it too. There are persons to whom we dare give no other evidences of the passion we have for them, but by things which do not concern them; and when we dare not let them know we love them, we should be glad, at least, to have them see we are not desirous of being

loved by any other; we ſhould be glad to convince them, that no other beauty, though of the higheſt rank, has any charms for us; and that a crown would be too dear, if purchaſed with no leſs a price than abſence from her we adore. Women ordinarily, continued he, judge of the paſſion one has for them, by the care one takes to oblige, and to be aſſiduous about them; but it is no hard matter to do this, though they be ever ſo little amiable; not to give one's ſelf up to the pleaſure of purſuing them, to ſhun them through fear of diſcovering to the public, and in a manner to themſelves, the ſentiments one has for them, here lies the difficulty; and what ſtill more demonſtrates the truth of one's paſſion is, the becoming entirely changed from what one was; and the having no longer a guſt either for ambition or pleaſure, after one has employed one's whole life in purſuit of both.

The princeſs of Cleves readily apprehended how far ſhe was concerned in this diſcourſe; one while ſhe ſeemed of opinion, that ſhe ought not to ſuffer ſuch an addreſs; another, ſhe thought ſhe ought not to ſeem to underſtand it, or ſhew ſhe ſuppoſed herſelf meant by it; ſhe thought ſhe ought to ſpeak, and ſhe thought ſhe ought to be ſilent; the duke of Nemours's diſcourſe equally pleaſed and offended her; ſhe was convinced by it of the truth of all the queen-dauphin had led her to think; ſhe found in it ſomewhat galant and reſpectful, but alſo ſomewhat bold and too intelligible; the inclination ſhe had for the duke gave her an anxiety which it was not in her power to controul; the moſt obſcure expreſſions of a man that pleaſes, move more than the moſt open declaration of one we have no liking for; ſhe made no anſwer: the duke de Nemours took notice of her ſilence, which perhaps would have proved no ill preſage, if the coming in of the prince of Cleves had not ended at once the converſation and the viſit.

The prince was coming to give his wife a further account of Sancerre, but ſhe was not over curious to learn the

the ſequel of that adventure. She was ſo much taken up with what had juſt paſſed, that ſhe could hardly conceal the embarraſſment ſhe was in. When ſhe was at liberty to muſe upon it, ſhe plainly ſaw ſhe was miſtaken, when ſhe thought ſhe was indifferent as to the duke de Nemours; what he had ſaid to her had made all the impreſſion he could deſire, and had entirely convinced her of his paſſion; beſides, the duke's actions agreed too well with his words, to leave her the leaſt doubt about it; ſhe no longer flattered herſelf that ſhe did not love him; all her care was not to let him diſcover it, a taſk of which ſhe had already experienced the difficulty. She knew the only way to ſucceed in it was to avoid ſeeing him; and as her mourning gave her an excuſe for being more retired than uſual, ſhe made uſe of that pretence not to go to places where he might ſee her. She was full of melancholy; her mother's death was the ſeeming cauſe of it, and no ſuſpicion was had of any other.

The duke de Nemours, not ſeeing her any more, fell into deſperation; and knowing he ſhould not meet with her in any public aſſembly, or at any diverſions the court joined in, he could not prevail upon himſelf to appear there; and therefore he pretended a great love for hunting, and made matches for that ſport on the days when the queens kept their aſſemblies; a ſlight indiſpoſition had ſerved him a good while as an excuſe for ſtaying at home, and declining to go to places where he knew very well that madam de Cleves would not be.

The prince of Cleves was ill almoſt at the ſame time, and the princeſs never ſtirred out of his room during his illneſs; but when he grew better, and received company, and among others the duke de Nemours, who ſtaid with him the greateſt part of the day, ſhe found ſhe could not continue any longer there; and yet in the firſt viſits he made ſhe had not the reſolution to go out; ſhe had been too long without ſeeing him, to be able to reſolve to ſee him no more; the duke had the addreſs, by diſcourſes that appeared altogether general, but which

ſhe underſtood very well by the relation they had to what he had ſaid privately to her, to let her know that he went a-hunting only to be more at liberty to think of her, and that the reaſon of his not going to the aſſemblies was her not being there.

At laſt ſhe executed the reſolution ſhe had taken to go out of her huſband's room whenever he was there, though this was doing the utmoſt violence to herſelf: the duke perceived ſhe avoided him, and the thought of it touched him to the heart.

The prince of Cleves did not immediately take notice of his wife's conduct in this particular; but at laſt he perceived ſhe went out of the room when there was company there. He ſpoke to her of it, and ſhe told him, that ſhe did not think it conſiſtent with decency to be every evening among the gay young courtiers; that ſhe hoped he would allow her to live in a more reſerved manner than ſhe had done hitherto; that the virtue and preſence of her mother authoriſed her in many liberties, which could not otherwiſe be juſtified in a woman of her age.

Monſieur de Cleves, who had a great deal of facility and complaiſance for his wife, did not ſhew it on this occaſion, but told her he would by no means conſent to her altering her conduct. She was upon the point of telling him, it was reported that the duke de Nemours was in love with her; but ſhe had not the power to name him: beſides, ſhe thought it diſingenuous to diſguiſe the truth, and make uſe of pretences to a man who had ſo good an opinion of her.

Some days after the king was with the queen at the aſſembly-hour, and the diſcourſe turned upon nativities and predictions; the company were divided in their opinion as to what credit ought to be given to them; the queen profeſſed to have great faith in them, and maintained, that after ſo many things had come to paſs as they had been foretold, one could not doubt but there was ſomething of certainty in that ſcience; others affirmed,

affirmed, that of an infinite number of predictions ſo very few proved true, that the truth of thoſe few ought to be looked upon as an effect of chance.

I have formerly been very curious and inquiſitive as to futurity, ſaid the king; but I have ſeen ſo many falſe and improbable things, that I am ſatisfied there is no truth in that pretended art. Not many years ſince there came hither a man of great reputation in aſtrology; every body went to ſee him; I went among others, but without ſaying who I was, and I carried with me the duke of Guiſe and Deſcars, and made them go in firſt; nevertheleſs the aſtrologer addreſſed himſelf firſt to me, as if he had concluded me to be their maſter; perhaps he knew me, and yet he told me one thing that was very unſuitabe to my character, if he had known me; his predicton was, that I ſhould be killed in a duel; he told the duke of Guiſe, that he ſhould die of a wound received behind; and he told Deſcars, he ſhould be knocked of the head by the kick of a horſe. The duke of Guiſe was a little angry at the prediction, as if it imported he ſhould run away; nor was Deſcars better pleaſed, to find he was to make his exit by ſo unfortunate an accident; in a word, we went away all three of us very much out of humour with the aſtrologer. I do not know what will happen to the duke of Guiſe and Deſcars, but there is not much probability of my being killed in a duel; the king of Spain and I have juſt made peace; and if we had not, I queſtion whether we ſhould have fought, or if I ſhould have challenged him, as the king my father did Charles V.

After the king had related the misfortune that was foretold him, thoſe who had defended aſtrology abandoned the argument, and agreed there was no credit to be given to it. For my part, ſaid the duke de Nemours aloud, I have the leaſt reaſon of any man in the world to credit it; and then turning himſelf to madam de Cleves, near whom he ſtood, It has been foretold me,

ſays he very ſoftly, that I ſhould be happy in a perſon for whom I ſhould have the moſt violent and reſpectful paſſion; you may judge, madam, if I ought to believe in predictions.

The queen-dauphin, who believed, from what the duke had ſpoke aloud, that what he whiſpered was ſome falſe prediction that had been told him, aſked him what it was he ſaid to madam de Cleves; had he had a leſs ready wit, he would have been ſurprized at this queſtion; but without any heſitation, What I ſaid to her, madam, anſwered he, was, that it had been predicted to me, that I ſhould be raiſed to a higher fortune than my moſt ſanguine hopes could lead me to expect.---If nothing has been foretold you but this, replied the queen-dauphin, ſmiling, and thinking of the affair of England, I would not adviſe you to decry aſtrology; you may have reaſons hereafter to offer in defence of it. Madam de Cleves apprehended the queen-dauphin's meaning; but knew withal, that the fortune the duke of Nemours ſpoke of was not that of being king of England.

The time of her mourning being expired, the princeſs of Cleves was obliged to make her appearance again, and go to court as uſual; ſhe ſaw the duke de Nemours at the queen-dauphin's apartment; ſhe ſaw him at the prince of Cleves's, where he often came in company of other young noblemen, to avoid being remarked; yet ſhe never once ſaw him, but it gave her a pain that could not eſcape his obſervation.

However induſtrious ſhe was to avoid being looked at by him, and to ſpeak leſs to him than to any other, ſome things eſcaped her in an unguarded moment, which convinced him he was not indifferent to her; a man of leſs diſcernment than he would not have perceived it; but he had already ſo often been the object of love, that it was eaſy for him to know when he was loved. He found the chevalier de Guiſe was his rival; and the chevalier knew that the duke de Nemours was his;

his; monſieur de Guiſe was the only man in the court that had unravelled this affair, his intereſt having made him more clear-ſighted than others; the knowledge they had of each other's ſentiments, created an oppoſition between them in every thing, which, however, did not break out into an open quarrel; they were always of different parties at the running at the ring, at tournaments, and all diverſions the king delighted in; and their emulation was ſo great, it could not be concealed.

Madam de Cleves frequently revolved in her mind the affair of England; ſhe believed the duke de Nemours could not reſiſt the advice of the king, and the inſtances of Lignerolles; ſhe was very much concerned to find that Lignerolles was not yet returned, and ſhe impatiently expected him; her inclinations ſtrongly ſwayed her to inform herſelf exactly of the ſtate of this affair; but the ſame reaſons, which raiſed in her that curioſity, obliged her to conceal it; and ſhe only enquired of the beauty, the wit, and the temper of queen Elizabeth. A picture of that princeſs had been brought the king, which madam de Cleves found much handſomer than ſhe could have wiſhed for; and ſhe could not forbear ſaying, the picture flattered. I do not think ſo, replied the queen-dauphin; that princeſs has the reputation of being very handſome, and of having a very exalted genius, and I know ſhe has always been propoſed to me as a model worthy my imitation; ſhe cannot but be very handſome, if ſhe reſembles her mother, Anne Bullen; never had woman ſo many charms and allurements, both in her perſon and her humour; I have heard ſay ſhe had ſomething remarkably lively in her countenance, very different from what is uſually found in other Engliſh beauties.---I think, replied madam de Cleves, 'tis ſaid ſhe was born in France.---Thoſe who imagine ſo are miſtaken, replied the queen-dauphin; I will give you her hiſtory in a few words.

She was of a good family in England; Henry VIIIth was in love with her ſiſter and her mother, and it has been even ſuſpected by ſome, that ſhe was his daughter; ſhe came to France with Henry VII.'s ſiſter, who married Lewis XIIth; that princeſs, who was full of youth and galantry, left the court of France with great reluctance after her huſband's death; but Anne Bullen, who had the ſame inclinations as her miſtreſs, could not prevail with herſelf to go away; the late king was in love with her, and ſhe continued maid of honour to queen Claude; that queen died, and Margaretta, the king's ſiſter, ducheſs of Alenſon, and ſince queen of Navarre, whoſe ſtory you know, took her into her ſervice, where ſhe imbibed the principles of the new religion; ſhe returned afterwards to England, and there charmed all the world. She had the manners of France, which pleaſe in all countries; ſhe ſung well, ſhe danced finely; ſhe was a maid of honour to queen Catherine, and Henry VIIIth fell deſperately in love with her.

Cardinal Wolſey, his favourite and firſt miniſter, being diſſatisfied with the emperor for not having favoured his pretenſions to the Papacy, in order to revenge himſelf of him, contrived an alliance between France and the king his maſter; he put it into the head of Henry VIIIth, that his marriage with the emperor's aunt was null, and adviſed him to marry the ducheſs of Alenſon, whoſe huſband was juſt dead; Anne Bullen, who was not without ambition, conſidered queen Catherine's divorce as a means that would bring her to the crown; ſhe began to give the king of England impreſſions of the Lutheran religion, and engaged the late king to favour at Rome Henry VIIIth's divorce, in hopes of his marrying the ducheſs of Alenſon; cardinal Wolſey, that he might have an opportunity of treating this affair, procured himſelf to be ſent to France upon other pretences; but his maſter was ſo far from permitting him to propoſe this marriage,

marriage, that he ſent him expreſs orders to Calais not to ſpeak of it.

Cardinal Wolſey, at his return from France, was received with as great honours as could have been paid to the king himſelf; never did any favourite carry his pride and vanity to ſo great a height; he managed an interview between the two kings at Bologne, when Francis I. would have given the upper-hand to Henry VIIIth; but he refuſed to accept it. They treated one another by turns with the utmoſt magnificence, and preſented to each habits of the ſame ſort with thoſe they wore themſelves. I remember to have heard ſay, that thoſe the late king ſent to the king of England, were of crimſon ſattin beſet all over with pearls and diamonds, and a robe of white velvet embroidered with gold. After having ſtaid ſome time at Bologne, they went to Calais. Anne Bullen was lodged in Henry VIIIth's court with the train of a queen; and Francis I. made her the ſame preſents, and paid her the ſame honours as if ſhe had been really ſo. In a word, after a paſſion of nine years continuance king Henry married her, without waiting for the diſſolving of his firſt marriage. The Pope precipitately thundered out excommunications againſt him; which ſo provoked king Henry, that he declared himſelf head of the church, and drew after him all England into the unhappy change in which you ſee it.

Anne Bullen did not long enjoy her greatneſs; for when ſhe thought herſelf moſt ſecure of it by the death of queen Catherine, one day as ſhe was ſeeing a match of running at the ring made by the viſcount Rochefort her brother, the king was ſtruck with ſuch a jealouſy, that he abruptly left the ſhow, went away to London, and gave orders for arreſting the queen, the viſcount Rochefort, and ſeveral others whom he believed to be the lovers or confidants of that princeſs. Though this jealouſy in appearance had its birth that moment, the king had been long poſſeſſed with it by the viſcounteſs

Rochefort, who not being able to bear the ſtrict intimacy between her huſband and the queen, repreſented it to the king as a criminal commerce; ſo that that prince, who was beſides in love with Jane Seymour, thought of nothing but ridding himſelf of Anne Bullen; and in leſs than three weeks he cauſed the queen and her brother to be tried, had them both beheaded, and married Jane Seymour. He had afterwards ſeveral wives, whom he divorced or put to death; and among others Catherine Howard, whoſe confidant the viſcount Rochefort was, and who was beheaded with her. Thus was ſhe puniſhed for having falſly accuſed Anne Bullen. And Henry VIIIth died, being become exceſſive fat.

All the ladies that were preſent when the queen-dauphin made this relation, thanked her for having given them ſo good an account of the court of England; and among the reſt madam de Cleves, who could not forbear aſking ſeveral queſtions concerning queen Elizabeth.

The queen-dauphin cauſed pictures in miniature to be drawn of all the beauties of the court, in order to ſend them to the queen her mother. One day, when that of madam de Cleves was finiſhed, the queen-dauphin came to ſpend the afternoon with her; the duke de Nemours did not fail to be there; he let ſlip no opportunities of ſeeing madam de Cleves, yet without appearing to contrive them. She looked ſo pretty that day, that he would have fell in love with her, though he had not been ſo before: however, he durſt not keep his eyes fixed upon her, while ſhe was ſitting for her picture, for fear of ſhewing too much the pleaſure he took in looking at her.

The queen-dauphin aſked monſieur de Cleves for a little picture he had of his wife's, to compare it with that which was juſt drawn; every body gave their judgment of the one and the other; and madam de Cleves ordered the painter to mend ſomething in the head-

head-dreſs of that which had been juſt brought in; the painter, in obedience to her, took the picture out of the caſe in which it was, and having mended it, laid it again on the table.

The duke de Nemours had long wiſhed to have a picture of madam de Cleves; when he ſaw that which monſieur de Cleves had, he could not reſiſt the temptation of ſtealing it from a huſband, who, he believed, was tenderly loved; and he thought, that among ſo many perſons as were in the ſame room, he ſhould be no more liable to ſuſpicion than another.

The queen-dauphin was ſitting on the bed, and whiſpering to madam de Cleves, who was ſtanding before her. Madam de Cleves, through one of the curtains that was but half-drawn, ſpied the duke de Nemours with his back to the table, that ſtood at the bed's feet, and perceived, that without turning his face he took ſomething very dextrouſly from off the table; ſhe preſently gueſſed it was her picture; and was in ſuch concern about it, that the queen-dauphin obſerved ſhe did not attend to what ſhe ſaid, and aſked her aloud what it was ſhe looked at. At thoſe words, the duke de Nemours turned about, and met full the eyes of madam de Cleves that were ſtill fixed upon him; he thought it not impoſſible but ſhe might have ſeen what he had done.

Madam de Cleves was not a little perplexed; it was reaſonable to demand her picture of him; but to demand it publicly, was to diſcover to the whole world the ſentiments which the duke had for her; and to demand it in private, would be to engage him to ſpeak of his love: ſhe judged, after all, it was better to let him keep it; and ſhe was glad to grant him a favour which ſhe could do without his knowing that ſhe granted it. The duke de Nemours, who obſerved her perplexity, and partly gueſſed the cauſe of it, came up, and told her ſoftly, If you have ſeen what I have ventured to do, be ſo good, madam, as to let me believe you are

ignorant of it; I dare aſk no more. Having ſaid this he withdrew, without waiting for her anſwer.

The queen-dauphin went to take a walk, attended with the reſt of the ladies; and the duke de Nemours went home to ſhut himſelf up in his cloſet, not being able to ſupport in public the ecſtaſy he was in on having a picture of madam de Cleves; he taſted every thing that was ſweet in love; he was in love with the fineſt woman of the court; he found ſhe loved him againſt her will; and ſaw in all her actions, that ſort of care and embarraſſment which love produces in young and innocent hearts.

At night great ſearch was made for the picture; and having found the caſe it uſed to be kept in, they never ſuſpected it had been ſtolen, but thought it might have fallen out by chance. The prince of Cleves was very much concerned for the loſs of it; and after having ſearched for it a great while to no purpoſe, he told his wife, but with an air that ſhewed he did not think ſo, that without doubt ſhe had ſome ſecret lover, to whom ſhe had given the picture, or who had ſtole it; and that none but a lover would have been contented with the picture without the caſe.

Theſe words, though ſpoke in jeſt, made a lively impreſſion in the mind of madam de Cleves; they gave her remorſe, and ſhe reflected on the violence of her inclination, which hurried her on to love the duke of Nemours; ſhe found ſhe was no longer miſtreſs of her words or countenance; ſhe imagined that Lignerolles was returned; that ſhe had nothing to fear from the affair of England, nor any cauſe to ſuſpect the queen-dauphin; in a word, that ſhe had no refuge or defence againſt the duke de Nemours but by retiring; but as ſhe was not at her liberty to retire, ſhe found herſelf in a very great extremity, and ready to fall into the laſt misfortune, that of diſcovering to the duke the inclination ſhe had for him. She remembered all that her mother had ſaid to her on her death-bed, and the advice which ſhe gave her, to enter on any reſolutions, however difficult

difficult they might be, rather than engage in galantry: ſhe remembred alſo what monſieur de Cleves had told her, when he gave an account of madam de Tournon. She thought ſhe ought to acknowledge to him the inclination ſhe had for the duke de Nemours, and in that thought ſhe continued a long time; afterwards, ſhe was aſtoniſhed to have entertained ſo ridiculous a deſign, and fell back again into her former perplexity of not knowing what to chuſe.

The peace was ſigned; and the lady Elizabeth, after a great deal of reluctance, reſolved to obey the king her father. The duke of Alva was appointed to marry her in the name of the Catholic king, and was very ſoon expected. The duke of Savoy too, who was to marry the king's ſiſter, and whoſe naptials were to be ſolemnized at the ſame time, was expected every day. The king thought of nothing but how to grace theſe marriages with ſuch diverſions as might diſplay the politeneſs and magnificence of his court. Interludes and comedies of the beſt kind were propoſed; but the king thought thoſe entertainments too private, and deſired to have ſomewhat of a more ſplendid nature: he reſolved to make a ſolemn tournament, to which ſtrangers might be invited, and of which the people might be ſpectators. The princeſs and young lords very much approved the king's deſign, eſpecially the duke of Ferrara, monſieur de Guiſe, and the duke de Nemours, who ſurpaſſed the reſt in theſe ſorts of exerciſes. The king made choice of them to be, together with himſelf, the four champions of the tournament.

Proclamation was made throughout the kingdom, that on the 15th of June, in the city of Paris, his moſt Chriſtian majeſty, and the princes Alphonſo d'Eté duke of Ferrara, Francis of Loraine duke of Guiſe, and James of Savoy duke of Nemours, would hold an open tournament againſt all comers. The firſt combat to be on horſe-back in the liſts, with double armour, to break four lances, and one for the ladies; the ſecond combat with ſwords, one to one, or two to two, as the judges

judges of the field ſhould direct; the third combat on foot, three puſhes of pikes, and ſix hits with the ſword. The champions to furniſh lances, ſwords, and pikes, at the choice of the combatants. Whoever did not manage his horſe in the career to be put out of the liſts; four judges of the field to give orders. The combatants, who ſhould break moſt lances and perform beſt, to carry the prize, the value whereof to be at the diſcretion of the judges: all the combatants, as well French as ſtrangers, to be obliged to touch one or more, at their choice, of the ſhields that ſhould hang on the pillar at the end of the liſts, where a herald at arms ſhould be ready to receive them, and enrol them according to their quality, and the ſhields they had touched: the combatants to be obliged to cauſe their ſhields and arms to be brought by a gentleman, and hung up at the pillar three days before the tournament, otherwiſe not to be admitted without leave of the champions.

A ſpacious liſt was made near the Baſtille, which begun from the Chateau des Tournelles, and croſſed the ſtreet of St. Anthony, and extended as far as the king's ſtables; on both ſides were built ſcaffolds and amphitheatres, which formed a ſort of galleries that made a very fine ſight, and were capable of containing an infinite number of people. The princes and lords were wholly taken up in providing what was neceſſary for a ſplendid appearance, and in mingling in their cyphers and devices ſomewhat of galantry, that had relation to the ladies they were in love with.

A few days before the duke of Alva's arrival, the king made a match at tennis with the duke de Nemours, the chevalier de Guiſe, and the viſcount de Chartres. The queens came to ſee them play, attended with the ladies of the court, and among others madam de Cleves. After the game was ended, as they went out of the tennis-court, Chatelart came up to the queen-dauphin, and told her, Fortune had put into his hands a letter of galantry, that dropped out of the duke de Nemours's pocket.

pocket. This queen, who was always very curious in what related to the duke, bid Chatelart give her the letter; he did ſo, and ſhe followed the queen her mother-in-law, who was going with the king to ſee them work at the liſts. After they had been there ſome time, the king cauſed ſome horſes to be brought that had been lately taken in; and though they were not as yet thoroughly managed, he was for mounting one of them, and ordered his attendants to mount others. The king and the duke de Nemours hit upon the moſt fiery and high-mettled of them. The horſes were ready to fall foul on one another, when the duke of Nemours, for fear of hurting the king, retreated abruptly, and ran back his horſe againſt a pillar with ſo much violence, that the ſhock of it made him ſtagger. The company ran up to him, and he was thought conſiderably hurt; but the princeſs of Cleves thought the hurt much greater than any one elſe. The intereſt ſhe had in it gave her an apprehenſion and concern which ſhe took no care to conceal; ſhe came up to him with the queens, and with a countenance ſo changed, that one leſs concerned than the chevalier de Guiſe might have perceived it. Perceive it he immediately did, and was much more intent upon the condition madam de Cleves was in, than upon that of the duke de Nemours. The blow the duke had given himſelf had ſo ſtunned him, that he continued ſome time leaning his head on thoſe who ſupported him; when he raiſed himſelf up, he immediately viewed madam de Cleves, and ſaw in her face the concern ſhe was in for him, and he looked upon her in a manner which made her ſenſible how much he was touched with it: afterwards he thanked the queens for the goodneſs they had expreſſed to him, and made apologies for the condition he had been in before them; and then the king ordered him to go to reſt.

Madam de Cleves, after ſhe was recovered from the fright ſhe had been in, preſently reflected on the tokens ſhe had given of it. The chevalier de Guiſe did not ſuffer

ſuffer her to continue long in the hope that nobody had perceived it, but giving her his hand to lead her out of the liſts, I have more cauſe to complain, madam, ſaid he, than the duke de Nemours; pardon me, if I forget for a moment that profound reſpect I have always had for you, and ſhew you how much my heart is grieved for what my eyes have juſt ſeen; this is the firſt time I have ever been ſo bold as to ſpeak to you, and it will be the laſt. Death, or at leaſt eternal abſence, will remove me from a place where I can live no longer, ſince I have now loſt the melancholy comfort I had of believing that all who behold you with love are as unhappy as myſelf.

Madam de Cleves made only a confuſed anſwer, as if ſhe had not underſtood what the chevalier's words meant: at another time ſhe would have been offended, if he had mentioned the paſſion he had for her; but at this moment ſhe felt nothing but the affliction to know, that he had obſerved the paſſion ſhe had for the duke de Nemours.

Madam de Cleves, when ſhe came out of the liſts, went to the queen's apartment, with her thoughts wholly taken up with what had paſſed. The duke de Nemours came there ſoon after, richly dreſſed, and like one wholly inſenſible of the accident that had befallen him; he appeared even more gay than uſual; and the joy he was in for what he had diſcovered, gave him an air that very much encreaſed his natural agreeableneſs. The whole court was ſurpriſed when he came in; and there was nobody but aſked him how he did, except madam de Cleves, who ſtaid near the chimney, pretending not to ſee him. The king coming out of his cloſet, and ſeeing him among others, called him to talk to him about his late accident. The duke paſſed by madam de Cleves, and ſaid ſoftly to her, Madam, I have received this day ſome marks of your pity, but they were not ſuch as I am moſt worthy of. Madam de Cleves ſuſpected that he had taken notice of the concern ſhe had

had been in for him, and what he now ſaid convinced her ſhe was not miſtaken; it gave her a great deal of concern, to find ſhe was ſo little miſtreſs of herſelf, as not to have been able to conceal her inclinations from the chevalier de Guiſe; nor was ſhe leſs concerned to ſee that the duke de Nemours was acquainted with them; yet this laſt grief was not ſo entire, but there was a certain mixture of pleaſure in it.

The queen-dauphin, who was extremely impatient to know what there was in the letter which Chatelart had given her, came up to madam de Cleves. Go read this letter, ſays ſhe; it is addreſſed to the duke of Nemours, and was probably ſent him by the miſtreſs for whom he has forſaken all others: if you cannot read it now, keep it, and bring it me about bed-time, and inform me if you know the hand. Having ſaid this, the queen-dauphin went away from madam de Cleves, and left her in ſuch aſtoniſhment, that ſhe was not able for ſome time to ſtir out of the place. The impatience and grief ſhe was in not permitting her to ſtay at court, ſhe went home before her uſual hour of retirement; ſhe trembled with the letter in her hand, her thoughts were full of confuſion, and ſhe experienced I know not what of inſupportable grief that ſhe had never felt before. No ſooner was ſhe in her cloſet, but ſhe opened the letter, and found it as follows:

'I Have loved you too well, to leave you in a belief 'that the change you obſerve in me is an effect of light-'neſs; I muſt inform you, that your falſhood is the 'cauſe of it. You will be ſurpriſed to hear me ſpeak of 'your falſhood; you have diſſembled it with ſo much 'ſkill, and I have taken ſo much care to conceal my 'knowledge of it from you, that you have reaſon to be 'ſurpriſed at the diſcovery; I am myſelf in wonder, 'that I have diſcovered nothing of it to you before; 'never was grief equal to mine; I thought you had the 'moſt violent paſſion for me; I did not conceal that 'which I had for you, and at the time that I acknow-

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'ledged it to you without reſerve, I found that you de-
'ceived me, that you loved another, and that, in all
'probability, I was made a ſacrifice to this new miſtreſs.
'I knew it the day you run at the ring, and this was
'the reaſon I was not there. At firſt I pretended an in-
'diſpoſition in order to conceal my ſorrow; but after-
'wards I really fell into one, nor could a conſtitution,
'delicate like mine, ſupport ſo violent a ſhock. When
'I began to be better, I ſtill counterfeited ſickneſs,
'that I might have an excuſe for not ſeeing and for not
'writing to you; beſides, I was willing to have time to
'come to a reſolution in what manner to deal with you;
'I took and quitted the ſame reſolution twenty times;
'but at laſt I concluded you deſerved not to ſee my
'grief, and I reſolved not to ſhew you the leaſt mark of
'it. I had a deſire to bring down your pride, by letting
'you ſee, that my paſſion for you declined of itſelf; I
'thought I ſhould by this leſſen the value of the ſacrifice
'you had made of me, and was loth you ſhould
'have the pleaſure of appearing more amiable in the
'eyes of another, by ſhewing her how much I loved
'you; I reſolved to write to you in a cold and lan-
'guiſhing manner, that ſhe, to whom you gave my
'letters, might perceive my love was at an end: I was
'unwilling ſhe ſhould have the ſatisfaction of knowing
'I was ſenſible that ſhe triumphed over me, or that ſhe
'ſhould encreaſe her triumph by my deſpair and com-
'plaints. I thought I ſhould puniſh you too little by
'merely breaking with you, and that my ceaſing to love
'you would give you but a ſlight concern, after you
'had firſt forſaken me; I found it was neceſſary you
'ſhould love me, to feel the ſmart of not being loved,
'which I ſo ſeverely experienced myſelf; I was of opi-
'nion, that if any thing could rekindle that flame, it
'would be to let you ſee that mine was extinguiſhed;
'but to let you ſee it through an endeavour to conceal
'it from you, as if I wanted the power to acknowledge
'it to you. This reſolution I adhered to, I found it

'difficult

'difficult to take; and when I ſaw you again I thought 'it impoſſible to execute. I was ready a hundred times 'to break out into tears and complaints; my ill ſtate of 'health, which ſtill continued, ſerved as a diſguiſe to 'hide from you the affliction and trouble I was in; after-'ward I was ſupported by the pleaſure of diſſembling 'with you, as you had done with me; however, it was 'doing ſo apparent a violence to myſelf to tell you, or to 'write to you that I loved you, that you immediately 'perceived I had no mind to let you ſee my affection 'was altered. You was touched with this, you com-'plained of it. I endeavoured to remove your fears; 'but it was done in ſo forced a manner, that you was 'ſtill more convinced by it I no longer loved you: in 'ſhort, I did all I intended to do. The fantaſticalneſs 'of your heart was ſuch, that you advanced towards 'me in proportion as you ſaw I retreated from you. I 'have enjoyed all the pleaſure which can ariſe from re-'venge. I plainly ſaw, that you loved me more than 'you had ever done; and I ſhewed you I had no longer 'any love for you. I had even reaſon to believe that 'you had entirely abandoned her, for whom you had 'forſaken me; I had ground too to be ſatisfied you had 'never ſpoken to her concerning me: but neither your 'diſcretion in that particular, nor the return of your 'affection, can make amends for your inconſtancy; your 'heart has been divided between me and another, and 'you have deceived me; this is ſufficient wholly to take 'from me the pleaſure I found in being loved by you, 'as I thought I deſerved to be; and to confirm me in 'the reſolution I have taken, never to ſee you more, 'which you are ſo much ſurpriſed at.'

Madam de Cleves read this letter, and read it over again ſeveral times, without knowing, at the ſame time, what ſhe had read; ſhe ſaw only that the duke de Nemours did not love her as ſhe imagined, and that he loved others who were no leſs deceived by him than ſhe. What a diſcovery was this for a perſon in her condition,

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who had a violent paſſion, who had juſt given marks of it to a man whom ſhe judged unworthy of it, and to another whom ſhe uſed ill for his ſake! Never was affliction ſo cutting as hers; ſhe imputed the piercingneſs of it to what had happened that day; and believed, that if the duke de Nemours had not had ground to believe ſhe loved him, ſhe ſhould not have cared whether he loved another or not: but ſhe deceived herſelf; and this evil which ſhe found ſo inſupportable was jealouſy, with all the horrors it can be accompanied with. This letter diſcovered to her a piece of galantry the duke de Nemours had been long engaged in. She ſaw the lady who writ it was a perſon of wit and merit, and deſerved to be loved. She found ſhe had more courage than herſelf, and envied her the power ſhe had had of concealing her ſentiments from the duke de Nemours. By the cloſe of the letter, ſhe ſaw this lady thought herſelf beloved, and preſently ſuſpected, that the diſcretion the duke had ſhewed in his addreſſes to her, and which ſhe had been ſo much taken with, was only an effect of his paſſion for this other miſtreſs, whom he was afraid of diſobliging. In ſhort, ſhe thought of every thing that could add to her grief and deſpair. What reflections did ſhe not make on herſelf, and on the advices her mother had given her! How did ſhe repent, that ſhe had not perſiſted in her reſolution of retiring, though againſt the will of monſieur de Cleves; or that ſhe had not purſued her intentions of acknowledging to him the inclination ſhe had for the duke of Nemours! She was convinced, ſhe would have done better to diſcover it to a huſband, whoſe goodneſs ſhe was ſenſible of, and whoſe intereſt it would have been to conceal it, than to let it appear to a man who was unworthy of it, who deceived her, who perhaps made a ſacrifice of her, and who had no view in being loved by her but to gratify his pride and vanity: in a word, ſhe found, that all the calamities that could befal her, and all the extremities ſhe could be reduced to, were leſs than that ſingle one of having diſcovered to the duke

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de Nemours that ſhe loved him, and of knowing that he loved another: all her comfort was to think, that after the knowledge of this ſhe had nothing more to fear from herſelf, and that ſhe ſhould be entirely eaſed of the inclination ſhe had for the duke.

She never thought of the orders the queen-dauphin had given her, to come to her when ſhe went to reſt: ſhe went to bed herſelf, and pretended to be ill; ſo that when monſieur de Cleves came home from the king, they told him ſhe was aſleep. But ſhe was far from that tranquility which inclines to ſleep; all the night ſhe did nothing but torment herſelf, and read over and over the letter in her hand.

Madam de Cleves was not the only perſon whom this letter diſturbed. The viſcount de Chartres, who had loſt it, and not the duke de Nemours, was in the utmoſt inquietude about it. He had been that evening with the duke of Guiſe, who had given a great entertainment to the duke of Ferrara his brother-in-law, and to all the young people of the court: it happened that the diſcourſe turned upon ingenious letters; and the viſcount de Chartres ſaid he had one about him the fineſt that ever was writ: they urged him to ſhew it; and on his excuſing himſelf, the duke de Nemours inſiſted he had no ſuch letter, and that what he ſaid was only out of vanity; the viſcount made him anſwer, that he urged his diſcretion to the utmoſt, that nevertheleſs he would not ſhew the letter; but he would read ſome parts of it, which would make it appear few men received the like. Having ſaid this, he would have taken out the letter, but could not find it; he ſearched for it to no purpoſe. The company rallied him about it; but he ſeemed ſo diſturbed, that they forbore to ſpeak further of it: he withdrew ſooner than the others, and went home with great impatience, to ſee if he had not left the letter there. While he was looking for it, one of the queen's pages came to tell him, that the viſcounteſs d'Uſez had thought it neceſſary to give him ſpeedy

advice,

advice, that it was ſaid at the queen's court, that he had dropped a letter of galantry out of his pocket while he was playing at tennis; that great part of what the letter contained had been related; that the queen had expreſſed a great curioſity to ſee it, and had ſent to one of her gentlemen for it; but that he anſwered, he had given it to Chatelart.

The page added many other particulars which heightened the viſcount's concern; he went out that minute to go to a gentleman who was an intimate friend of Chatelart's; and though it was a very unſeaſonable hour, made him get out of bed to go and fetch the letter, without letting him know who it was had ſent for it, or who had loſt it. Chatelart, who was prepoſſeſſed with an opinion that it belonged to the duke de Nemours, and that the duke was in love with the queen-dauphin, did not doubt but it was he who had ſent to redemand it; and ſo anſwered, with a malicious ſort of joy, that he had put the letter into the queen-dauphin's hands. The gentleman brought this anſwer back to the viſcount de Chartres, which encreaſed the uneaſineſs he was under already, and added new vexations to it: after having continued ſome time in an irreſolution what to do, he found that the duke de Nemours was the only perſon whoſe aſſiſtance could draw him out of this intricate affair.

Accordingly he went to the duke's houſe, and entered his room about break of day. What the duke had diſcovered the day before with reſpect to the princeſs of Cleves had given him ſuch agreeable ideas, that he ſlept very ſweetly; he was very much ſurpriſed to find himſelf waked by the viſcount de Chartres, and aſked him, if he came to diſturb his reſt ſo early, to be revenged of him for what he had ſaid laſt night at ſupper. The viſcount's looks ſoon convinced him, that he came upon a ſerious buſineſs; I am come, ſaid he, to entruſt you with the moſt important affair of my life; I know very well, you are not obliged to me for the confidence I place in you, becauſe I do it at a time when I ſtand in need

need of your aſſiſtance; but I know likewiſe, that I ſhould have loſt your eſteem, if I had acquainted you with all I am now going to tell you, without having been forced to it by abſolute neceſſity: I have dropped the letter I ſpoke of laſt night; it is of the greateſt conſequence to me, that nobody ſhould know it is addreſſed to me; it has been ſeen by abundance of people, who were at the tennis-court yeſterday when I dropped it; you was there too, and the favour I have to aſk you, is, to ſay it was you who loſt it.---Sure you think, replied the duke de Nemours ſmiling, that I have no miſtreſs, by making ſuch a propoſal, and that I have no quarrels or inconveniences to apprehend by leaving it to be believed that I receive ſuch letters.---I beg you, ſaid the viſcount, to hear me ſeriouſly; if you have a miſtreſs, as I doubt not you have, though I do not know who ſhe is, it will be eaſy for you to juſtify yourſelf; and I will put you into an infallible way of doing it. As for you, though you ſhould fail in juſtifying yourſelf, it can coſt you nothing but a ſhort falling out; but for my part, this accident affects me in a very different manner; I ſhall diſhonour a perſon who has paſſionately loved me, and is one of the moſt deſerving women in the world; on the other ſide, I ſhall draw upon myſelf an implacable hatred that will ruin my fortune, and perhaps proceed ſomewhat further.---I do not comprehend what you ſay, replied the duke de Nemours; but I begin to ſee that the reports we have had of your intereſt in a great princeſs are not wholly without ground.---They are not, replied the viſcount; but I would to God they were: you would not ſee me in the perplexity I am in; but I muſt relate the whole affair to you, to convince you how much I have to fear.

Ever ſince I came to court, the queen has treated me with a great deal of favour and diſtinction, and I had grounds to believe that ſhe was very kindly diſpoſed towards me: there was nothing, however, particular in all this, and I never preſumed to entertain any thoughts

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of her but what were full of reſpect; ſo far from it, that I was deeply in love with madam de Themines; any one that ſees her may eaſily judge, 'tis very poſſible for one to be greatly in love with her, when one is beloved by her; and ſo I was. About two years ago, the court being at Fontainbleau, I was two or three times in converſation with the queen, at hours when there were very few people in her apartment: It appeared to me, that my turn of wit was agreeable to her, and I obſerved ſhe always approved what I ſaid. One day, among others, ſhe fell into a diſcourſe concerning confidence. I ſaid there was nobody in whom I entirely confided; that I found people always repented of having done ſo; and that I knew a great many things of which I had never ſpoke. The queen told me, ſhe eſteemed me the more for it; that ſhe had not found in France any one that could keep a ſecret, and that this was what had embarraſſed her more than any thing elſe, becauſe it had deprived her of the pleaſure of having a confidant; that nothing was ſo neceſſary in life as to have ſomebody one could open one's mind to with ſafety, eſpecially for people of her rank. Afterwards ſhe frequently reſumed the ſame diſcourſe, and acquainted me with very particular circumſtances; at laſt, I imagined ſhe was deſirous to learn my ſecrets, and to entruſt me with her own; this thought engaged me ſtrictly to her. I was ſo pleaſed with this diſtinction, that I made my court to her with greater aſſiduity than uſual. One evening the king and the ladies of the court rode out to take the air in the foreſt, but the queen being a little indiſpoſed did not go; I ſtaid to wait upon her, and ſhe walked down to the pond-ſide, and diſmiſſed her gentlemen-uſhers, that ſhe might be more at liberty. After ſhe had taken a few turns, ſhe came up to me, and bid me follow her; I would ſpeak with you, ſays ſhe, and by what I ſhall ſay, you will ſee I am your friend. She ſtopped here, and looking earneſtly at me, You are in love, continued ſhe; and becauſe, perhaps, you

have made nobody your confidant, you think that your love is not known; but it is known, and even by perſons who are intereſted in it: you are obſerved, the place where you ſee your miſtreſs is diſcovered, and there is a deſign to ſurprize you; I don't know who ſhe is, nor do I aſk you to tell me; I would only ſecure you from the misfortunes into which you may fall. See, I beſeech you, what a ſnare the queen laid for me, and how difficult it was for me not to fall into it; ſhe had a mind to know if I was in love; and as ſhe did not aſk me who I was in love with, but let me ſee her intention was only to ſerve me, I had no ſuſpicion that ſhe ſpoke either out of curioſity or by deſign.

Nevertheleſs, contrary to all probability, I ſaw into the bottom of the matter; I was in love with madam de Themines; but though ſhe loved me again, I was not happy enough to have private places to ſee her in without danger of being diſcovered there, and ſo I was ſatisfied ſhe could not be the perſon the queen meant; I knew alſo, that I had an intrigue with another woman, leſs handſome and leſs reſerved than madam de Themines, and that it was not impoſſible but the place where I ſaw her might be diſcovered; but as this was a buſineſs I little cared for, it was eaſy for me to guard againſt all ſorts of danger by forbearing to ſee her. I reſolved, therefore, to acknowledge nothing of it to the queen, but to aſſure her, on the contrary, that I had a long time laid aſide the deſire of gaining women's affections, even where I might hope for ſucceſs, becauſe I found them all, in ſome meaſure, unworthy of engaging the heart of an honourable man, and that it muſt be ſomething very much above them which could touch me.---You do not anſwer me ingenuouſly, replied the queen; I am ſatisfied of the contrary; the free manner in which I ſpeak to you, ought to oblige you to conceal nothing from me; I would have you, continued ſhe, be of the number of my friends; but I would not, after having admitted you into that rank, be ignorant of your engagements; conſider, whether you think my

friendſhip will be too dear at the price of making me your confidante; I give you two days to think on it; but then, conſider well of the anſwer you ſhall make me; and remember, that if ever I find hereafter you have deceived me, I ſhall never forgive you as long as I live.

Having ſaid this, the queen left me without waiting for my anſwer. You may imagine how full my thoughts were of what ſhe had ſaid to me; the two days ſhe had given me to conſider of it I did not think too long a time to come to a reſolution; I found ſhe had a mind to know if I was in love, and that her deſire was I ſhould not be ſo; I foreſaw the conſequences of what I was going to do; my vanity was flattered with the thought of having a particular intereſt with the queen, and a queen whoſe perſon is ſtill extremely amiable: on the other hand, I was in love with madam de Themines; and though I had committed a petty treaſon againſt her by my engagement with the other woman I told you of, I could not find in my heart to break with her; I foreſaw alſo the danger I ſhould expoſe myſelf to, if I deceived the queen, and how hard it would be to do it; nevertheleſs I could not reſolve to refuſe what Fortune offered me, and was willing to run the hazard of any thing my ill-conduct might draw upon me; I broke with her with whom I kept a correſpondence that might be diſcovered, and was in hopes of concealing that I had with madam de Themines.

At the two days end, as I entered the room where the queen was with all the ladies about her, ſhe ſaid aloud to me, and with a grave air that was ſurpriſing enough, Have you thought of the buſineſs I charged you with, and do you know the truth of it?---Yes, madam, anſwered I, and it is as I told your majeſty. ---Come in the evening, when I am writing, replied ſhe, and you ſhall have further orders.---I made a reſpectful bow without anſwering any thing, and did not fail to attend at the hour ſhe had appointed me. I found her in the gallery, with her ſecretary and one of her

her women. As ſoon as ſhe ſaw me ſhe came to me, and took me to the other end of the gallery; Well, ſays ſhe, after having conſidered thoroughly of this matter, have you nothing to ſay to me? and as to my manner of treating you, does not it deſerve that you ſhould deal ſincerely with me?---It is, madam, anſwered I, becauſe I deal ſincerely, that I have nothing more to ſay; and I ſwear to your majeſty, with all the reſpect I owe you, that I have no engagement with any woman of the court.---I will believe it, replied the queen, becauſe I wiſh it; and I wiſh it, becauſe I deſire to have you entirely mine, and becauſe it would be impoſſible for me to be ſatisfied with your friendſhip, if you were in love; one cannot confide in thoſe who are; one cannot be ſecure of their ſecrecy; they are too much divided, and their miſtreſſes have always the firſt place in their thoughts, which does not ſuit at all with the manner in which I would have you live with me: remember then, it is upon your giving me your word that you have no engagement, that I chuſe you for my confidant; remember, I inſiſt on having you entirely to myſelf, and that you ſhall have no friend of either ſex but ſuch as I ſhall approve, and that you abandon every care but that of pleaſing me; I'll not deſire you to neglect any opportunity for advancing your fortune; I'll conduct your intereſts with more application than you can yourſelf; and whatever I do for you, I ſhall think myſelf more than recompenſed, if you anſwer my expectations; I make choice of you, to open my heart's griefs to you, and to have your aſſiſtance in ſoftening them; you may imagine they are not ſmall: I bear, in appearance without much concern, the king's engagement with the ducheſs of Valentinois, but it is inſupportable to me; ſhe governs the king, ſhe impoſes upon him; ſhe ſlights me, all my people are at her beck. The queen, my daughter-in-law, proud of her beauty, and the authority of her uncles, pays me no reſpect. The conſtable Montmorency is maſter of the king and

kingdom; he hates me, and has given proofs of his hatred, which I ſhall never forget. The mareſchal de St. André is a bold young favourite, who uſes me no better than the others. The detail of my misfortunes would move your pity; hitherto I have not dared to confide in any body; I confide in you; take care that I never repent it, and be my only conſolation. The queen bluſhed when ſhe had ended this diſcourſe, and I was ſo truly touched with the goodneſs ſhe had expreſſed to me, that I was going to throw myſelf at her feet: from that day ſhe has placed an entire confidence in me; ſhe has done nothing without adviſing with me; and the intimacy and union between us ſtill ſubſiſt.

PART III.

IN the mean time, however buſy and full I was of my new engagement with the queen, I ſtill kept fair with madam de Themines, by a natural inclination which it was not in my power to conquer; I thought ſhe cooled in her love to me; and whereas, had I been prudent, I ſhould have made uſe of the change I obſerved in her for my cure, my love redoubled upon it, and I managed ſo ill, that the queen got ſome knowledge of this intrigue. Jealouſy is natural to perſons of her nation, and perhaps ſhe had a greater affection for me than ſhe even imagined herſelf; at leaſt, the report of my being in love gave her ſo much uneaſineſs, that I thought myſelf entirely ruined with her; however, I came into favour again by virtue of ſubmiſſions, falſe oaths, and aſſiduity; but I ſhould not have been able to have deceived her long, had not madam de Themines's change diſengaged me from her againſt my will. She convinced me ſhe no longer loved me; and I

was

was ſo thoroughly ſatisfied of it, that I was obliged to give her no further uneaſineſs, but to let her be quiet. Some time after ſhe wrote me this letter which I have loſt; I learned from it, ſhe had heard of the correſpondence I had with the other woman I told you of, and that that was the reaſon of her change. As I had then nothing further left to divide me, the queen was well enough ſatisfied with me; but the ſentiments I have for her not being of a nature to render me incapable of other engagements, and love not being a thing that depends on our will, I fell in love with madam de Martigues, of whom I was formerly a great admirer while ſhe was with Villemontais, maid of honour to the queen-dauphin. I have reaſon to believe ſhe does not hate me; the diſcretion I obſerve towards her, and which ſhe does not wholly know the reaſons of, is very agreeable to her; the queen has not the leaſt ſuſpicion on her account; but ſhe has another jealouſy which is not leſs troubleſome: as madam de Martigues is conſtanly with the queen-dauphin, I go there much oftener than uſual; the queen imagines that it is this princeſs I am in love with; the queen-dauphin's rank, which is equal to her own, and the ſuperiority of her youth and beauty, create a jealouſy that riſes even to fury, and fills her with a hatred againſt her daughter-in-law that cannot be concealed. The cardinal of Loraine, who, I believe, has been long aſpiring to the queen's favour, and would be glad to fill the place I poſſeſs, is, under pretence of reconciling the two queens, become maſter of the differences between them; I doubt not but he has diſcovered the true cauſe of the queen's anger, and I believe he does me all manner of ill offices, without letting her ſee that he deſigns it. This is the condition my affairs are in at preſent; judge what effect may be produced by the letter which I have loſt, and which I unfortunately put in my pocket, with deſign to reſtore it to madam de Themines: if the queen ſees this letter, ſhe will know I have deceived her; and that almoſt at the very ſame

time that I deceived her for madam de Themines, I deceived madam de Themines for another; judge what an idea this will give her of me, and whether ſhe will ever truſt me again. If ſhe does not ſee the letter, what ſhall I ſay to her? She knows it has been given to the queen-dauphin; ſhe will think Chatelart knew that queen's hand, and that the letter is from her; ſhe will fancy the perſon of whom the letter expreſſes a jealouſy, is perhaps herſelf; in ſhort, there is nothing which ſhe may not think, and there is nothing which I ought not to fear from her thoughts: add to this, that I am deſperately in love with madam de Martigues, and that the queen-dauphin will certainly ſhew her this letter, which ſhe will conclude to have been lately writ. Thus ſhall I be equally embroiled, both with the perſon I love moſt, and with the perſon I have moſt cauſe to fear. Judge, after this, if I have not reaſon to conjure you to ſay the letter is yours, and to beg of you to get it out of the queen-dauphin's hands.

I am very well ſatisfied, anſwered the duke de Nemours, that one cannot be in a greater embarraſſment than that you are in, and it muſt be confeſt you deſerve it. I have been accuſed of being inconſtant in my amours, and of having had ſeveral intrigues at the ſame time; but you out-go me ſo far, that I ſhould not ſo much as have dared to imagine what you have undertaken; could you pretend to keep madam de Themines, and be at the ſame time engaged with the queen? Did you hope to have an engagement with the queen, and be able to deceive her? She is both an Italian and a queen, and by conſequence full of jealouſy, ſuſpicion, and pride. As ſoon as your good fortune, rather than your good conduct, had ſet you at liberty from an engagement you were entangled in, you involved yourſelf in new ones; and you fancied, that in the midſt of the court you could be in love with madam de Martigues without the queen's perceiving it. You could not have been too careful to take from her the ſhame of having made

made the firſt advances; ſhe has a violent paſſion for you; you have more diſcretion than to tell it me, and I than to aſk you to tell it; it is certain ſhe is jealous of you, and has truth on her ſide.---And does it belong to you, interrupted the viſcount, to load me with reprimands, and ought not your own experience to make you indulgent to my faults? However, I grant I am to blame; but think, I conjure you, how to draw me out of this difficulty; I think you muſt go to the queen-dauphin as ſoon as ſhe is awake, and aſk her for the letter, as if you had loſt it.---I have told you already, replied the duke de Nemours, that what you propoſe is ſomewhat extraordinary, and that there are difficulties in it which may affect my own particular intereſt; but beſides, if this letter has been ſeen to drop out of your pocket, I ſhould think it would be hard to perſuade people that it dropt out of mine.---I thought I had told you, replied the viſcount, that the queen-dauphin had been informed that you dropped it.---How, ſaid the duke de Nemours haſtily, apprehending the ill conſequence this miſtake might be of to him with madam de Cleves, has the queen-dauphin been told I dropped the letter? ---Yes, replied the viſcount, ſhe has been told ſo; and what occaſioned the miſtake was, that there were ſeveral gentlemen of the two queens in a room belonging to the tennis-court, where our cloaths were put up, when your ſervants and mine went together to fetch them; then it was the letter fell out of the pocket; thoſe gentlemen took it up, and read it aloud; ſome believed it belonged to you, and others to me; Chatelart, who took it, and to whom I have juſt ſent for it, ſays, he gave it to the queen-dauphin as a letter of yours; and thoſe who have ſpoken of it to the queen, have unfortunately told her it was mine; ſo that you may eaſily do what I deſire of you, and free me from this perplexity.

The duke de Nemours had always had a great friendſhip for the viſcount de Chartres, and the relation he

bore to madam de Cleves ſtill made him more dear to him; nevertheleſs, he could not prevail with himſelf to run the riſk of her having heard of this letter, as of a thing in which he was concerned; he fell into a deep muſing, and the viſcount gueſſed pretty near what was the ſubject of his meditations. I plainly ſee, ſaid he, that you are afraid of embroiling yourſelf with your miſtreſs; and I ſhould almoſt fancy the queen-dauphin was ſhe, if the little jealouſy you ſeem to have of monſieur d'Anville did not take me off from that thought; but be that as it will, it is not reaſonable you ſhould ſacrifice your repoſe to mine; and I will put you in a way of convincing her you love, that this letter is directed to me, and not to you: here is a billet from madam d'Amboiſe, who is a friend of madam de Themines, and was her confidante in the amour between her and me; in this ſhe deſires me to ſend her madam de Themines's letter, which I have loſt; my name is on the ſuperſcription, and the contents of the billet prove, without queſtion, that the letter ſhe deſires is the ſame with that which has been found; I will leave this billet in your hands, and agree that you may ſhew it to your miſtreſs in your juſtification; I conjure you not to loſe a moment, but to go this morning to the queen-dauphin.

The duke de Nemours promiſed the viſcount he would, and took madam d'Amboiſe's billet; nevertheleſs, his deſign was not to ſee the queen-dauphin; he thought more preſſing buſineſs required his care; he made no queſtion, but ſhe had already ſpoke of the letter to madam de Cleves, and could not bear that a perſon he loved ſo deſperately, ſhould have ground to believe he had engagements with any other.

He went to the princeſs of Cleves as ſoon as he thought ſhe might be awake; and ordered her to be told, that, if he had not buſineſs of the laſt conſequence, he would not have deſired the honour to ſee her at ſo extraordinary an hour. Madam de Cleves was in bed, and

and her mind was toſt to and fro by a thouſand melancholy thoughts that ſhe had had during the night; ſhe was extremely ſurpriſed to hear the duke de Nemours aſked for her; the anxiety ſhe was in made her preſently anſwer, that ſhe was ill, and could not ſpeak with him.

The duke was not at all ſhocked at this refuſal; he thought it preſaged him no ill, that ſhe expreſſed a little coldneſs at a time when ſhe might be touched with jealouſy. He went to the prince of Cleves's apartment, and told him he came from that of his lady, and that he was very ſorry he could not ſee her, becauſe he had an affair to communicate to her of great conſequence to the viſcount de Chartres; he explained in few words to the prince the importance of this buſineſs, and the prince immediately introduced him into his lady's chamber. Had ſhe not been in the dark, ſhe would have found it hard to have concealed the trouble and aſtoniſhment ſhe was in to ſee the duke de Nemours introduced by her huſband. Monſieur de Cleves told her the buſineſs was about a letter, wherein her aſſiſtance was wanting for the intereſt of the viſcount; that ſhe was to conſult with monſieur de Nemours what was to be done; and that as for him, he was going to the king, who had juſt ſent for him.

The duke de Nemours had his heart's deſire, in being alone with madam de Cleves. I am come to aſk you, madam, ſaid he, if the queen-dauphin has not ſpoke to you of a letter which Chatelart gave her yeſterday.---She ſaid ſomething to me of it, replied madam de Cleves; but I do not ſee what relation this letter has to the intereſts of my uncle, and I can aſſure you that he is not named in it.---It is true, madam, replied the duke de Nemours, he is not named in it; but yet it is addreſſed to him, and it very much imports him that you ſhould get it out of the queen-dauphin's hands. ---I cannot comprehend, replied the princeſs, how it ſhould be of any conſequence to him if this letter ſhould be ſeen, nor what reaſon there is to re-demand it

in his name.---If you pleaſe to be at leiſure to hear me, madam, ſaid monſieur de Nemours, I will preſently make you acquainted with the true ſtate of the thing; and inform you of matters of ſo great importance to the viſcount, that I would not even have truſted the prince of Cleves with them, had I not ſtood in need of his aſſiſtance to have the honour to ſee you.---I believe, ſaid madam de Cleves in a very unconcerned manner, that any thing you may give yourſelf the trouble of telling me, will be to little purpoſe; you had better go to the queen-dauphin, and plainly tell her, without uſing theſe round-about ways, the intereſt you have in that letter, ſince ſhe has been told, as well as I, that it belongs to you.

The uneaſineſs of mind which monſieur de Nemours obſerved in madam de Cleves gave him the moſt ſenſible pleaſure he ever knew, and leſſened his impatience to juſtify himſelf: I do not know, madam, replied he, what the queen-dauphin may have been told; but I am not at all concerned in that letter; it is addreſſed to the viſcount.---I believe ſo, replied madam de Cleves; but the queen-dauphin has heard to the contrary, and ſhe would not think it very probable that the viſcount's letter ſhould fall out of your pocket; you muſt therefore have ſome reaſon, that I do not know of, for concealing the truth of this matter from the queen-dauphin; I adviſe you to confeſs it to her.---I have nothing to confeſs to her; ſays he, the letter is not directed to me; and if there be any one that I would have ſatisfied of it, it is not the queen-dauphin; but, madam, ſince the viſcount's intereſt is nearly concerned in this, be pleaſed to let me acquaint you with ſome matters that are worthy of your curioſity. Madam de Cleves by her ſilence ſhewed her readineſs to hear him, and he as ſuccinctly as poſſible related to her all he had juſt heard from the viſcount. Though the circumſtances were naturally ſurpriſing, and proper to create attention, yet madam de Cleves heard them with ſuch coldneſs,

neſs, that ſhe ſeemed either not to believe them true, or to think them indifferent to her. She continued in this temper until the duke de Nemours ſpoke of madam d'Amboiſe's billet, which was directed to the viſcount, and was a proof of all he had been ſaying; as madam de Cleves knew that this lady was a friend of madam de Themines, ſhe found ſome probability in what the duke de Nemours had ſaid, which made her think, that the letter perhaps was not addreſſed to him; this thought ſuddenly, and in ſpite of herſelf, drew her out of the coldneſs and indifferency ſhe had until then been in. The duke having read the billet, which fully juſtified him, preſented it to her to read, and told her ſhe might poſſibly know the hand. She could not forbear taking it, and examining the ſuperſcription, to ſee if it was addreſſed to the viſcount de Chartres; and reading it all over, that ſhe might the better judge, if the letter which was re-demanded was the ſame with that ſhe had in her hand. The duke de Nemours added whatever he thought proper to perſuade her of it; and as one is eaſily perſuaded of the truth of what one wiſhes, he ſoon convinced madam de Cleves that he had no concern in the letter.

She began now to reaſon with him concerning the embarraſſment and danger the viſcount was in, to blame his ill conduct, and to think of means to help him. She was aſtoniſhed at the queen's proceedings, and confeſſed to the duke that ſhe had the letter; in ſhort, ſhe no ſooner believed him innocent, but ſhe diſcourſed with him with greater eaſe and freedom concerning what ſhe would ſcarce before vouchſafe to hear. They agreed that the letter ſhould not be reſtored to the queen-dauphin, for fear ſhe ſhould ſhew it to madam de Martigues, who knew madam de Themines's hand, and would eaſily gueſs, by the intereſt ſhe had in the viſcount, that it was addreſſed to him: they agreed alſo, that they ought not to entruſt the queen-dauphin with all that concerned the queen her mother-in-law.

Madam de Cleves, under pretence of ſerving her uncle, was pleaſed to be the duke de Nemours's confidante in the ſecrets he had imparted to her.

The duke would not have confined his diſcourſe to the viſcount's concerns; but from the liberty he had of free converſation with her, would have aſſumed a boldneſs he had never yet done, had not a meſſage been brought in to madam de Cleves, that the queen-dauphin had ſent for her. The duke was forced to withdraw; he went to the viſcount to inform him, that after he had left him, he thought it proper to apply to madam de Cleves, his niece, than to go directly to the queen-dauphin; he did not want reaſons to make him approve what he had done, and to give him hopes of good ſucceſs.

In the mean time madam de Cleves dreſſed herſelf in all haſte to go to the queen-dauphin; ſhe was no ſooner entered her chamber, but ſhe called her to her, and whiſpered her, I have been waiting for you theſe two hours, and was never ſo perplexed about diſguiſing a truth as I have been this morning: the queen has heard of the letter I gave you yeſterday, and believes it was the viſcount de Chartres that dropped it; you know ſhe has ſome intereſt to be ſatisfied in it; ſhe has been in ſearch for the letter, and has cauſed Chatelart to be aſked for it; who ſaid he had given it to me; they have been to aſk me for it, under pretence it was an ingenious letter which the queen had a curioſity to ſee. I durſt not ſay that you had it, for fear ſhe ſhould think I had given it you on your uncle the viſcount's account, and that there was a correſpondence between him and me. I was already ſatisfied, that his ſeeing me ſo often gave her uneaſineſs; ſo that I ſaid the letter was in the cloaths I had on yeſterday, and that thoſe who had them in keeping were gone abroad: Give me the letter immediately, added ſhe, that I may ſend it her, and that I may read it before I ſend it, to ſee if I know the hand.

Madam

Madam de Cleves was harder put to it than ſhe expected; I do not know, madam, what you will do, anſwered ſhe; for monſieur de Cleves, to whom I gave it to read, returned it to the duke of Nemours, who came early this morning to beg him to get it of you. Monſieur de Cleves had the imprudence to tell him he had it, and the weakneſs to yield to the entreaties the duke de Nemours made, that he would reſtore it him. ---You throw me into the greateſt embarraſſment I can poſſibly be in, replied the queen-dauphin; and you have given this letter to the duke de Nemours. Since it was I that gave it you, you ought not to have reſtored it without my leave; what would you have me ſay to the queen, and what can ſhe imagine? She will think, and not without reaſon, that this letter concerns myſelf, and that there is ſomething between the viſcount and me; ſhe will never be perſuaded the letter belonged to the duke de Nemours.---I am very much concerned, replied madam de Cleves, for the misfortune I have occaſioned, and I believe the difficulty I have brought you into is very great; but it was monſieur de Cleves's fault, and not mine.---You are in fault, replied the queen-dauphin, for having given him the letter; and I believe you are the only woman in the world that acquaints her huſband with all ſhe knows.---I acknowledge myſelf in fault, madam, replied the princeſs of Cleves; but let us rather think of preventing the conſequences of what I have done, than inſiſt on the fault itſelf.---Do you remember, pretty near, what the letter contains? ſays the queen-dauphin, ---Yes, madam, I do, replied ſhe, for I have read it over more than once.---If ſo, ſaid the queen-dauphin, you muſt immediately get it written out in an unknown hand, and I will ſend it to the queen; ſhe will not ſhew it thoſe who have ſeen it already; and though ſhe ſhould, I will ſtand in it, that it is the ſame Chatelart gave me; and he will not dare to ſay otherwiſe.

Madam

Madam de Cleves approved of this expedient; and the more, becauſe it gave her an opportunity of ſending for the duke de Nemours, to have the letter itſelf again, in order to have it copied word for word, imitating as near as may be the hand it was written in; and ſhe thought this would effectually deceive the queen. As ſoon as ſhe was got home, ſhe informed her huſband of what had paſſed between her and the queen-dauphin, and begged him to ſend for the duke de Nemours. The duke was ſent for, and came immediately; madam de Cleves told him all ſhe had told her huſband, and aſked for the letter; but the duke anſwered, that he had already returned it to the viſcount de Chartres; who was ſo overjoyed upon having it again, and being freed from the danger he was in, that he ſent it immediately to madam de Themines's friend. Madam de Cleves was in a new embarraſſment on this occaſion: in ſhort, after having conſulted together, they reſolved to form the letter by memory; and, in order to go about it, they locked themſelves up, and left orders that nobody ſhould be admitted, and that all the duke de Nemours's attendants ſhould be ſent away. Such an appearance of ſecret confidence was no ſmall charm to monſieur de Nemours, and even to madam de Cleves; her huſband's preſence, and the intereſts of her uncle the viſcount de Chartres, were conſiderations which in great meaſure removed her ſcruples, and made this opportunity of ſeeing and being with the duke de Nemours ſo agreeable to her, that ſhe never before experienced a joy ſo pure and free from allay; this threw her into a freedom and gaiety of ſpirit, which the duke had never obſerved in her till now, and which made him ſtill more paſſionately in love with her: As he had never known ſuch agreeable moments, his vivacity was much heightened; and whenever madam de Cleves was beginning to recollect and write the letter, inſtead of aſſiſting her ſeriouſly, did nothing but interrupt her with wit and pleaſantry. Madam de Cleves was as gay as he; ſo that they had been

been locked up a conſiderable time, and two meſſages had come from the queen-dauphin to haſten madam de Cleves, before they had half finiſhed the letter.

The duke de Nemours was glad to prolong the time that was ſo agreeable to him, and neglected the concerns of his friend; madam de Cleves was not at all tired, and neglected alſo the concerns of her uncle: at laſt, with much ado, about four o'clock the letter was finiſhed, and was ſo ill done, and the copy ſo unlike the original, as to the hand-writing, that the queen muſt have taken very little care to come at the truth of the matter, if ſhe had been impoſed on by ſo ill a counterfeit. Accordingly ſhe was not deceived; and however induſtrious they were to perſuade her that this letter was addreſſed to the duke de Nemours, ſhe remained ſatisfied not only that it was addreſſed to the viſcount de Chartres, but that the queen-dauphin was concerned in it, and that there was a correſpondence between them; this heightened her hatred againſt that princeſs to ſuch a degree, that ſhe never forgave her, and never ceaſed perſecuting her till ſhe had driven her out of France.

As for the viſcount de Chartres, his credit was entirely ruined with her; and whether the cardinal of Lorain had already inſinuated himſelf ſo far into her eſteem as to govern her; or whether the accident of this letter, which made it appear that the viſcount had deceived her, enabled her to diſcover the other tricks he had played her, 'tis certain he could never after entirely reconcile himſelf to her; their correſpondence was broke off, and at length ſhe ruined him by means of the conſpiracy of Amboiſe, in which he was involved.

After the letter was ſent to the queen-dauphin, monſieur de Cleves and monſieur de Nemours went away; madam de Cleves continued alone, and being no longer ſupported by the joy which the preſence of what one loves gives one, ſhe ſeemed like one newly waked from a dream;

a dream; ſhe beheld, with aſtoniſhment, the difference between the condition ſhe was in the night before, and that ſhe was in at this time: ſhe called to mind, how cold and ſullen ſhe was to the duke de Nemours while ſhe thought madam de Themines's letter was addreſſed to him, and how calm and ſweet a ſituation of mind ſucceeded that uneaſineſs, as ſoon as ſhe was ſatisfied he was not concerned in that letter; when ſhe reflected, that ſhe reproached herſelf as guilty for having given him the foregoing day only ſome marks of ſenſibility, which mere compaſſion might have produced, and that by her peeviſh humour this morning ſhe had expreſſed ſuch a jealouſy as was a certain proof of paſſion, ſhe thought ſhe was not herſelf; when ſhe reflected further, that the duke de Nemours ſaw plainly, that ſhe knew he was in love with her, and that, notwithſtanding her knowing it, ſhe did not uſe him the worſe for it, even in her huſband's preſence; but that, on the contrary, ſhe had never behaved ſo favourably to him; when ſhe conſidered, ſhe was the cauſe of monſieur de Cleves's ſending for him, and that ſhe had juſt paſſed an afternoon in private with him; when ſhe conſidered all this, ſhe found there was ſomething within her that held intelligence with the duke de Nemours, and that ſhe deceived a huſband who leaſt deſerved it; and ſhe was aſhamed to appear ſo little worthy of eſteem, even in the eyes of her lover; but what ſhe was able to ſupport leſs than all the reſt was, the remembrance of the condition in which ſhe ſpent the laſt night, and the griefs ſhe felt from a ſuſpicion that the duke de Nemours was in love with another, and that ſhe was deceived by him.

Never till then was ſhe acquainted with the dreadful inquietudes that flow from jealouſy and diſtruſt; ſhe had applied all her cares to prevent herſelf from falling in love with the duke de Nemours, and had not before had any fear of his being in love with another. Though the ſuſpicions which this letter had given her were effaced, yet they left her ſenſible of the hazard there was of being deceived,

deceived, and gave her impreſſions of diſtruſt and jealouſy which ſhe had never felt till that time; ſhe was ſurpriſed, that ſhe had never yet reflected, how improbable it was, that a man of the duke de Nemours's turn, who had ſhewed ſo much inconſtancy towards women, ſhould be capable of a laſting and ſincere paſſion; ſhe thought it next to impoſſible for her to be convinced of the truth of his love: But though I could be convinced of it, ſays ſhe, ſhall I permit it? Shall I make a return? Shall I engage in galantry, be falſe to monſieur de Cleves, and be falſe to myſelf? In a word, ſhall I go to expoſe myſelf to the cruel remorſes and deadly griefs that riſe from love? I am ſubdued and vanquiſhed by a paſſion, which hurries me away in ſpite of myſelf; all my reſolutions are vain; I had the ſame thoughts yeſterday that I have to-day, and I act to-day contrary to what I reſolved yeſterday; I muſt convey myſelf out of the ſight of the duke de Nemours; I muſt go into the country, however fantaſtical my journey appear; and if monſieur de Cleves is obſtinately bent to hinder me, or to know my reaſons for it, perhaps I ſhall do him and myſelf the injury to acquaint him with them. She continued in this reſolution, and ſpent the whole evening at home, without going to the queen-dauphin to enquire what had happened with reſpect to the counterfeited letter.

When the prince of Cleves returned home, ſhe told him ſhe was reſolved to go into the country; that ſhe was not very well, and had occaſion to take the air. Monſieur de Cleves, to whom ſhe appeared ſo beautiful that he could not think her indiſpoſition very conſiderable, at firſt made a jeſt of her deſign, and anſwered, that ſhe had forgot that the nuptials of the princeſſes and the tournament were very near, and that ſhe had not too much time to prepare matters ſo as to appear there as magnificently as other ladies. What her huſband ſaid did not make her change her reſolution; and ſhe begged he would agree, that while he was at Compiegne

piegne with the king, ſhe might go to Colomiers, a pretty houſe then building, within a day's journey of Paris. Monſieur de Cleves conſented to it; ſhe went thither with a deſign of not returning ſo ſoon, and the king ſet out for Compiegne, where he was to ſtay but a few days.

The duke de Nemours was mightily concerned he had not ſeen madam de Cleves ſince that afternoon, which he had ſpent ſo agreeably with her, and which had encreaſed his hopes; he was ſo impatient to ſee her again, that he could not reſt; ſo that when the king returned to Paris, the duke reſolved to go to ſee his ſiſter the ducheſs de Mercœur, who was at a country-ſeat of her's, very near Colomiers; he aſked the viſcount to go with him, who readily conſented to it. The duke de Nemours did this in hopes of viſiting Madam de Cleves, in company of the viſcount.

Madam de Mercœur received them with a great deal of joy, and thought of nothing but giving them all the pleaſures and diverſions of the country. One day, as they were hunting a ſtag, the duke de Nemours loſt himſelf in the foreſt, and upon enquiring his way was told he was near Colomiers; at that word, without further reflection, or ſo much as knowing what deſign he was upon, he galloped on full ſpeed the way that had been ſhewed him; as he rode along he came by chance to the made-ways and walks, which he judged led to the caſtle: at the end of theſe he found an arbour, behind which was a pavilion with two cloſets, the one opening into a flower-garden, and the other looking into a ſpacious walk in the park. He entered the pavilion, and would have ſtopped to obſerve the beauty of it, if he had not ſeen in the walk the prince and princeſs of Cleves, attended with a numerous train of their domeſtics. As he did not expect to meet monſieur de Cleves there, whom he had left with the king, he thought at firſt of hiding himſelf; he entered the cloſet which looked into the flower-garden, with

with deſign to go out that way by a door which opened to the foreſt; but obſerving madam de Cleves and her huſband were ſat down in the arbour, and that their attendants ſtaid in the park, and could not come to him without paſſing by the place where monſieur and madam de Cleves were, he could not deny himſelf the pleaſure of ſeeing this princeſs, nor reſiſt the curioſity he had to hear her converſation with a huſband, who gave him more jealouſy than any of his rivals. He heard monſieur de Cleves ſay to his wife, But why will you not return to Paris? What can keep you here in the country? You have of late taken a fancy for ſolitude, at which I am both ſurpriſed and concerned, becauſe it deprives me of your company: I find, too, you are more melancholy than uſual, and I am afraid you have ſome cauſe of grief.---I have nothing to trouble my mind, anſwered ſhe with an air of confuſion; but there is ſuch a buſtle at court, and ſuch a multitude of people always at your houſe, that it is impoſſible but both body and mind ſhould be fatigued, and one cannot but deſire repoſe.---Repoſe, anſwered he, is not very proper for one of your age; you are at home, and at court, in ſuch a manner as cannot occaſion wearineſs, and I am rather afraid you deſire to live apart from me.---You would do me great wrong to think ſo, replied ſhe with yet more confuſion, but I beg you to leave me here; if you could ſtay here, and without company, I ſhould be very glad of it; nothing would be more agreeable to me than your converſation in this retirement, provided you would approve not to have about you that infinite number of people, who in a manner never leave you.---Ah! madam, cries monſieur de Cleves, both your looks and words convince me, that you have reaſons to deſire to be alone which I do not know; I conjure you to tell them me. He urged her a great while to inform him, without being able to bring her to it; and after ſhe had excuſed herſelf in a manner which ſtill encreaſed her huſband's curioſity, ſhe continued in a deep ſilence, with her

her eyes caſt down; then, taking up the diſcourſe on a ſudden, and looking upon him, Force me not, ſaid ſhe, to confeſs a thing to you which I have not the power to own, though I have often deſigned it; remember only, that it is not prudent a woman of my years, and miſtreſs of her own conduct, ſhould remain expoſed in the midſt of a court.---What is it, madam, cried monſieur de Cleves, that you lead me to imagine? I dare not ſpeak it, for fear of offending you. Madam de Cleves making no anſwer, her ſilence confirmed her huſband in what he thought: You ſay nothing to me, ſays he, and that tells me clearly, that I am not miſtaken.---Alas! ſir, anſwered ſhe, falling on her knees, I am going to make a confeſſion to you, ſuch as no woman ever yet made to her huſband; but the innocence of my intentions, and of my conduct, gives me power to do it; it is true, I have reaſons to abſent myſelf from the court, and I would avoid the dangers perſons of my age are ſometimes liable to; I have never ſhewn any mark of weakneſs, and I cannot apprehend I ever ſhall, if you will permit me to retire from court, ſince now I have not madam de Chartres to aſſiſt me in my conduct; however dangerous a ſtep I am taking, I take it with pleaſure, to preſerve myſelf worthy of you; I aſk you a thouſand pardons, if I have ſentiments which diſpleaſe you, at leaſt, I will never do ſo by my actions; conſider, that to do what I do, requires more friendſhip and eſteem for a huſband than ever wife had; direct my conduct, have pity on me, and, if you can, ſtill love me.

Monſieur de Cleves, all the while ſhe ſpoke, continued leaning his head on his hand, almoſt beſide himſelf, and never thought of raiſing her up. When ſhe had done ſpeaking, and he caſt his eyes upon her, and ſaw her on her knees with her face drowned in tears, inimitably beautiful, he was ready to die for grief, and taking her up in his arms, Have you pity on me, madam, ſays he, for I deſerve it, and pardon me, if in the firſt moments of an affliction ſo violent as mine, I do

not

not anſwer as I ought to ſo generous a proceeding as yours; I think you more worthy of eſteem and admiration than any woman that ever was, but I find myſelf alſo the moſt unfortunate of men: you inſpired me with paſſion the firſt moment I ſaw you, and that paſſion has never decayed; not your coldneſs, nor even enjoyment itſelf, has been able to extinguiſh it; it ſtill continues in its firſt force; and yet it has not been in my power to kindle in your breaſt any ſpark of love for me, and now I find you fear you have an inclination for another; and who is he, madam, this happy man that gives you ſuch apprehenſions? How long has he charmed you? What has he done to charm you? What method has he taken to get into your heart? When I could not gain your affections myſelf, it was ſome comfort to me to think, that no other could; in the mean time, another has effected what I could not; and I have, at once, the jealouſy of a huſband and a lover. But it is impoſſible for me to retain that of a huſband after ſuch a proceeding on your part, which is too noble and ingenuous not to give me an entire ſecurity; it even comforts me as a lover; the ſincerity you have expreſſed, and the confidence you have placed in me, are of infinite value: you have eſteem enough for me to believe I ſhall not abuſe the confeſſion you have made to me: you are in the right, madam, I will not abuſe it, or love you the leſs for it; you make me unhappy by the greateſt mark of fidelity ever woman gave her huſband; but go on, madam, and inform me who he is whom you would avoid.---I beg you not to aſk me, replied ſhe; I am reſolved not to tell you, nor do I think it prudent to name him.---Fear not, madam, replied monſieur de Cleves; I know the world too well to be ignorant that a woman's having a huſband does not hinder people from being in love with her; ſuch lovers may be the objects of one's hatred, but we are not to complain of it; once again, madam, I conjure you to tell me what I ſo much deſire to know.---It is in vain to preſs me, replied ſhe; I have

the power to be ſilent in what I think I ought not to tell; the confeſſion I made to you, was not owing to any weakneſs, and it required more courage to declare ſuch a truth, than it would have done to conceal it.

The duke de Nemours did not loſe a word of this converſation, and what madam de Cleves had ſaid gave him no leſs jealouſy than her huſband; he was ſo deſperately in love with her, that he believed all the world was ſo too; it is true, he had many rivals, yet he fancied them ſtill more, and his thoughts wandered to find out who it was madam de Cleves meant: he had often thought he was not diſagreeable to her; but the grounds of his judgment on this occaſion appeared ſo ſlight, that he could not imagine he had raiſed in her heart a paſſion violent enough to oblige her to have recourſe to ſo extraordinary a remedy; he was ſo tranſported, that he ſcarce knew what he ſaw, and he could not pardon monſieur de Cleves for not having preſſed his wife enough to tell him the name of the perſon ſhe concealed from him.

Monſieur de Cleves, nevertheleſs, uſed his utmoſt endeavours to know it; and having urged her very much on the ſubject---I think, anſwered ſhe, that you ought to be ſatisfied with my ſincerity; aſk me no more about it, and do not give me cauſe to repent of what I have done; content yourſelf with the aſſurance which I once more give you, that my ſentiments have never appeared by any of my actions, and that no addreſs hath been made to me that could give me offence.---Ah! madam, replied monſieur de Cleves on a ſudden, I cannot believe it; I remember the confuſion you was in when your picture was loſt; you have given away, madam, you have given away that picture, which was ſo dear to me, and which I had ſo juſt a right to; you have not been able to conceal your inclinations; you are in love; it is known; your virtue has hitherto ſaved you from the reſt.---Is it poſſible, cried madam de Cleves, you can imagine there was any reſerve or diſguiſe in a confeſſion

feſſion like mine, which I was no way obliged to? Take my word, I purchaſe dearly the confidence I deſire of you; I conjure you to believe I have not given away my picture; it is true, I ſaw it taken; but I would not ſeem to ſee it, for fear of ſubjecting myſelf to hear ſuch things as no one has yet dared to mention to me.---How do you know then that you are loved? ſaid monſieur de Cleves. What mark, what proof of it has been given you? ---Spare me the pain, replied ſhe, of repeating to you circumſtances which I am aſhamed to have obſerved, and which have convinced me but too much of my own weakneſs.------You are in the right, madam, anſwered he, I am unjuſt; always refuſe me when I aſk you ſuch things, and yet do not be angry with me for aſking them.

Juſt then ſeveral of the ſervants, who had ſtaid in the walks, came to acquaint monſieur de Cleves, that a gentleman was arrived from the king, with orders for him to be at Paris that evening. Monſieur de Cleves was obliged to go, and had only time to tell his wife, that he deſired her to come to Paris the next day; and that he conjured her to believe, that however afflicted he was, he had a tenderneſs and eſteem for her with which ſhe ought to be ſatisfied.

When he was gone, and madam de Cleves being alone, conſidered what ſhe had done, ſhe was ſo frightened at the thought of it, ſhe could hardly believe it to be true. She found ſhe had deprived herſelf of the heart and eſteem of her huſband, and was involved in a labyrinth ſhe ſhould never get out of; ſhe aſked herſelf, why ſhe had ventured on ſo dangerous a ſtep, and perceived ſhe was engaged in it almoſt without having deſigned it; the ſingularity of ſuch a confeſſion, for which ſhe ſaw no precedent, made her fully ſenſible of her danger.

But, on the other hand, when ſhe came to think that this remedy, however violent it was, was the only effectual one ſhe could make uſe of againſt monſieur de Nemours, ſhe found ſhe had no cauſe to repent, or to believe

believe she had ventured too far; she passed the whole night full of doubts, anxiety and fear; but at last her spirits grew calm again; she even felt a pleasure arise in her mind, from a sense of having given such a proof of fidelity to a husband who deserved it so well, who had so great a friendship and esteem for her, and had so lately manifested it by the manner in which he received the confession she had made him.

In the mean time monsieur de Nemours was gone away from the place in which he had overheard a conversation which so sensibly affected him, and was got deep into the forest; what madam de Cleves said of her picture had revived him, since it was certain from thence that he was the person she had an inclination for: at first he gave a loose to joy; but his raptures were at an end as soon as he began to reflect, that the same thing that convinced him he had touched the heart of madam de Cleves, ought to convince him also that he should never receive any marks of it, and that it would be impossible to engage a lady who had recourse to so extraordinary a remedy; and yet he could not but be sensibly pleased to have reduced her to that extremity; he thought it glorious for him to have gained the affections of a woman so different from the rest of her sex; in a word, he thought himself very happy, and very unhappy at the same time. He was benighted in the forest, and was very much put to it to find his way again to his sister's, the duchess of Mercœur; he arrived there at break of day, and was extremely at a loss what account to give of his absence; but he made out the matter as well as he could, and returned that very day to Paris with the viscount.

The duke was so taken up with his passion, and so surprized at the conversation he had heard, that he fell into an indiscretion very common, which is, to speak one's own particular sentiments in general terms, and to relate one's proper adventures under borrowed names. As they were travelling, he began to talk of love, and exag-

exaggerated the pleaſure of being in love with a perſon that deſerved it; he ſpoke of the fantaſtical effects of this paſſion; and at laſt, not being able to contain within himſelf the admiration he was in at the action of madam de Cleves, he related it to the viſcount without naming the perſon, or owning he had any ſhare in it; but he told it with ſo much warmth and ſurpriſe, that the viſcount eaſily ſuſpected the ſtory concerned himſelf. The viſcount urged him very much to confeſs it, and told him he had known a great while that he was violently in love, and that it was unjuſt in him to ſhew a diſtruſt of a man, who had committed to him a ſecret on which his life depended. The duke de Nemours was too much in love to own it, and had always concealed it from the viſcount, though he valued him the moſt of any man at court; he anſwered, That one of his friends had told him this adventure, and made him promiſe not to ſpeak of it; and he alſo conjured the viſcount to keep the ſecret: the viſcount aſſured him he would ſay nothing of it; but notwithſtanding, monſieur de Nemours repented that he had told him ſo much.

In the mean time monſieur de Cleves was gone to the king, with a heart full of affliction. Never had huſband ſo violent a paſſion for his wife, or ſo great an eſteem; what ſhe had told him did not take away his eſteem of her, but made it of a different nature from that he had had before; what chiefly employ'd his thoughts, was a deſire to gueſs who it was that had found out the ſecret to win her heart. The duke de Nemours was the firſt perſon he thought of on this occaſion, as being the handſomeſt man at court; and the chevalier de Guiſe and the mareſchal de St. André occurred next, as two perſons who had made it their endeavour to get her love, and who were ſtill very aſſiduous in courting her; ſo that he was fully perſuaded it muſt be one of the three. He arrived at the Louvre; and the king carried him into his cloſet to inform him, he had made choice of him to conduct Madame into Spain; and that he be-

lieved nobody could acquit himſelf better of that charge, nor that any lady would do France greater honour than madam de Cleves. Monſieur de Cleves received the honour the king had done him by this choice with the reſpect he ought, and he conſidered it alſo as what would take his wife from court, without leaving room to ſuſpect any change in her conduct; but the embarraſſment he was under required a ſpeedier remedy than that journey, which was to be deferred a great while, could afford; he immediately writ to madam de Cleves to acquaint her with what the king had told him; and gave her to underſtand, he abſolutely expected ſhe ſhould return to Paris. She returned according to his orders, and when they met, they found one another overwhelmed with melancholy.

Monſieur de Cleves ſpoke to her, as a man of the greateſt honour in the world, and the beſt deſerving the confidence ſhe had repoſed in him: I am not alarmed as to your conduct, ſaid he, you have more ſtrength and virtue than you imagine; I am not alarmed with fears of what may happen hereafter; what troubles me is, that I ſee you have thoſe ſentiments for another which you want for me.---I do not know what to anſwer you, ſaid ſhe, I die with ſhame when I ſpeak of this ſubject; ſpare me, I conjure you, ſuch cruel converſations; regulate my conduct, and never let me ſee any body; this is all I deſire of you; but take it not ill of me, if I ſpeak no more of a thing which makes me appear ſo little worthy of you, and which I think ſo unbecoming me.---You are in the right, madam, replied he, I abuſe your goodneſs and your confidence in me; but have ſome compaſſion alſo on the condition you have brought me to; and think, that whatever you have told me, you conceal from me a name, which creates in me a curioſity I cannot live without ſatisfying; and yet I aſk you not to ſatisfy it; I cannot, however, forbear telling you, that I believe the man I am to envy is the mareſchal de St. André, the duke de Nemours,

or

or the chevalier de Guiſe.---I ſhall make you no anſwer, ſays ſhe bluſhing, nor give you any ground, from what I ſay, either to leſſen or ſtrengthen your ſuſpicions; but if you endeavour to inform yourſelf by obſerving me, you will throw me into a confuſion all the world will take notice of; for God's ſake, continued ſhe, allow me, under pretence of an indiſpoſition, to ſee nobody.---No, madam, ſaid he, it will quickly be diſcovered to be a feigned buſineſs; and beſides, I am unwilling to truſt you to any thing but yourſelf; my heart tells me this is the beſt way I can take, and my reaſon tells me ſo alſo; conſidering the temper of mind you are in, I cannot put a greater reſtraint upon you, than by leaving you to your liberty.

Monſieur de Cleves was not miſtaken; the confidence he ſhewed he had in his wife, fortified her the more againſt monſieur de Nemours, and made her take more ſevere reſolutions than any reſtraint could have brought her to. She went to wait on the queen-dauphin at the Louvre, as ſhe uſed to do; but avoided the preſence and eyes of monſieur de Nemours with ſo much care, that ſhe deprived him of almoſt all the joy he had in thinking ſhe loved him; he ſaw nothing in her actions but what ſeemed to ſhew the contrary; he ſcarcely knew if what he had heard was not a dream, ſo very improbable it ſeemed to him. The only thing which aſſured him that he was not miſtaken, was madam de Cleves's extreme melancholy, which appeared, whatever pains ſhe took to hide it; and perhaps kind words and looks would not have increaſed the duke of Nemours's love ſo much as this ſevere conduct did.

One evening, as monſieur and madam de Cleves were at the queen's apartment, it was ſaid there was a report that the king would name another great lord to wait on Madame into Spain. Monſieur de Cleves had his eye fixed on his wife, when it was further ſaid, the chevalier de Guiſe, or the mareſchal de St. André, was the perſon; he obſerved ſhe was not at all moved

at either of thoſe names, nor the diſcourſe of their going along with her; this made him believe, it was not either of them whoſe preſence ſhe feared: in order to clear up his ſuſpicions, he went into the queen's cloſet, where the king then was, and after having ſtaid there ſome time, came back to his wife, and whiſpered her, that he had juſt heard the duke de Nemours was the perſon deſigned to go along with them to Spain.

The name of the duke de Nemours, and the thought of being expoſed to ſee him every day, during a very long journey, in her huſband's preſence, ſo affected madam de Cleves, that ſhe could not conceal her trouble: and being willing to give other reaſons for it, No choice, ſays ſhe, could have been made more diſagreeable for you; he will ſhare all honours with you, and I think you ought to endeavour to get ſome other choſen. ---It is not honour, madam, reply'd monſieur de Cleves, that makes you apprehenſive of the duke de Nemours's going with me, the uneaſineſs you are in proceeds from another cauſe; and from this uneaſineſs of yours I learn, that which I ſhould have diſcovered in another woman by the joy ſhe would have expreſſed on ſuch an occaſion; but be not afraid; what I have told you is not true, it was an invention of mine to aſſure myſelf of a thing which I already believed but too much. Having ſaid this, he went out, being unwilling to increaſe, by his preſence, the concern he ſaw his wife in.

The duke de Nemours came in that inſtant, and preſently obſerved madam de Cleves's condition; he came up to her, and told her ſoftly, he had that reſpect for her, he durſt not aſk what it was made her more penſive than uſual. The voice of the duke de Nemours brought her to herſelf again, and looking at him, without having heard what he had ſaid to her, full of her own thoughts, and afraid leſt her huſband ſhould ſee him with her, For God's ſake, ſays ſhe, leave me to myſelf in quiet.---Alas! madam, anſwered he, I diſturb you too little; what is it you can complain of? I dare not ſpeak

to

to you, I dare not look upon you, I tremble whenever I approach you. How have I drawn upon myſelf what you have ſaid to me? and why do you ſhew me, that I am in part the cauſe of the trouble I ſee you in? Madam de Cleves was very ſorry to have given the duke an opportunity of explaining himſelf more clearly than ever he had done before; ſhe left him without making any anſwer, and went home with her mind more agitated than ever. Her huſband perceived her concern was increaſed, and that ſhe was afraid he would ſpeak to her of what had paſt, and followed her into her cloſet: Do not ſhun me, madam, ſays he, I will ſay nothing to you that ſhall diſpleaſe you; I aſk pardon for the ſurprize I gave you a while ago; I am ſufficiently puniſhed by what I have learnt from it; the duke de Nemours was of all men he whom I moſt feared; I ſee the danger you are in; command yourſelf for your own ſake, and, if it is poſſible, for mine; I do not aſk this of you as a huſband, but as a man whoſe happineſs wholly depends on you, and who loves you more violently and more tenderly than he whom your heart prefers to me. Monſieur de Cleves was melted upon ſpeaking theſe words, and could ſcarce make an end of them; his wife was ſo moved, ſhe burſt into tears, and embraced him with a tenderneſs and ſorrow that put him into a condition not very different from her own. They continued ſilent a while, and parted without having the power to ſpeak to one another.

All things were ready for the marriage of Madame, and the duke of Alva was arrived to eſpouſe her; he was received with all the ceremony and magnificence that could be diſplay'd on ſuch an occaſion; the king ſent to meet him the prince of Conde, the cardinals of Lorain and Guiſe, the dukes of Lorain and Ferrara, d'Aumale, de Bouillon, de Guiſe, and de Nemours; they had a great number of gentlemen, and a great many pages in livery; the king himſelf, attended with

two hundred gentlemen, and the conſtable at their head, received the duke of Alva at the firſt gate of the Louvre; the duke would have kneeled down, but the king refuſed it, and made him walk by his ſide to the queen's apartment, and to Madame's, to whom the duke of Alva had brought a magnificent preſent from his maſter; he went thence to the apartment of madam Margaret, the king's ſiſter, to compliment her on the part of the duke of Savoy, and to aſſure her he would arrive in a few days. There were great aſſemblies at the Louvre, to ſhew the duke of Alva, and the prince of Orange who accompanied him, the beauties of the court.

Madam de Cleves could not diſpenſe with going to theſe aſſemblies, however deſirous ſhe was to be abſent, for fear of diſobliging her huſband, who abſolutely commanded her to be there; and, what yet more induced her to it, was the abſence of the duke de Nemours; he was gone to meet the duke of Savoy; and after the arrival of that prince, he was obliged to be almoſt always with him, to aſſiſt him in every thing relating to the ceremonies of the nuptials; for this reaſon madam de Cleves did not meet him ſo often as ſhe uſed to do, which gave her ſome ſort of eaſe.

The viſcount de Chartres had not forgot the converſation he had had with the duke de Nemours: it ſtill ran in his mind, that the adventure the duke had related to him was his own; and he obſerved him ſo carefully, that it is probable he would have unravelled the buſineſs, if the arrival of the duke of Alva and of the duke of Savoy had not made ſuch an alteration in the court, and filled it with ſo much buſineſs, as left no opportunities for a diſcovery of that nature; the deſire he had to get ſome information about it, or rather the natural diſpoſition one has to relate all one knows to thoſe one loves, made him acquaint madam de Martigues with the extraordinary action of that perſon, who had confeſſed to her huſband the paſſion ſhe had for another. He aſſured her, the duke de Nemours

was

was the man who had inſpired ſo violent a love, and begged her aſſiſtance in obſerving him. Madam de Martigues was glad to hear what the viſcount told her; and the curioſity ſhe had always obſerved in the queen-dauphin for what concerned the duke de Nemours, made her yet more deſirous to ſearch into the bottom of the affair.

A few days before that which was fixed for the ceremony of the marriage, the queen-dauphin entertained at ſupper the king her father-in-law, and the ducheſs of Valentinois. Madam de Cleves, who had been buſy in dreſſing herſelf, went to the Louvre later than ordinary; as ſhe was going, ſhe met a gentleman, that was coming from the queen-dauphin to fetch her; as ſoon as ſhe entered the room, that princeſs, who was ſitting upon her bed, told her aloud, that ſhe had expected her with great impatience.---I believe, madam, anſwered ſhe, that I am not obliged to you for it, and that your impatience was cauſed by ſomething elſe, and not your deſire to ſee me.---You are in the right, anſwered the queen-dauphin; but, nevertheleſs, you are obliged to me; for I will tell you an adventure, which I am ſure you will be glad to know.

Madam de Cleves kneeled at her bed-ſide, and, very luckily for her, with her face from the light: You know, ſaid the queen, how deſirous we have been to find out what had cauſed ſo great a change in the duke of Nemours; I believe I know it, and it is what will ſurpriſe you; he is deſperately in love with, and as much beloved by, one of the fineſt ladies of the court. It is eaſy to imagine the grief madam de Cleves felt upon hearing theſe words, which ſhe could not apply to herſelf, ſince ſhe thought nobody knew any thing of her paſſion for the duke; I ſee nothing extraordinary in that, replied ſhe, conſidering how young and handſame a man the duke de Nemours is.---No, replied the queen-dauphin, there is nothing extraordinary in it; but what will ſurpriſe you is, that this lady, who is in

love with the duke de Nemours, has never given him any mark of it, and that the fear ſhe was in leſt ſhe ſhould not always be miſtreſs of her paſſion, has made her confeſs it to her huſband, that he may take her away from court; and it is the duke de Nemours himſelf who has related what I tell you.

If madam de Cleves was grieved at firſt through the thought that ſhe had no concern in this adventure, the queen-dauphin's laſt words threw her into an agony, by making it certain ſhe had too much in it; ſhe could not anſwer, but continued leaning her head on the bed. Meanwhile the queen went on, and was ſo intent on what ſhe was ſaying, that ſhe took no notice of her embarraſſment. When madam de Cleves was a little come to herſelf, This ſtory, madam, ſays ſhe, does not ſeem very probable to me, and I ſhould be glad to know who told it you.---It was madam de Martigues, replied the queen-dauphin, and ſhe heard it from the viſcount de Chartres; you know the viſcount is in love with her; he entruſted this matter to her as a ſecret, and he was told it by the duke de Nemours himſelf; it is true, the duke did not tell the lady's name, nor acknowledge that he was the perſon ſhe was in love with, but the viſcount makes no manner of queſtion of it. When the queen-dauphin had done ſpeaking, ſomebody came up to the bed; madam de Cleves was ſo placed that ſhe could not ſee who it was, but ſhe was preſently convinced, when the queen-dauphin cried out, with an air of gaiety and ſurprize, Here he is himſelf, I will aſk him what there is in it. Madam de Cleves knew very well it was the duke de Nemours, without turning herſelf, as it really was; upon which ſhe went up haſtily to the queen-dauphin, and told her ſoftly, that ſhe ought to be cautious of ſpeaking to him of this adventure, which he had entruſted to the viſcount de Chartres as a ſecret, and that it was a thing which might create a quarrel between them.---You are too wiſe, ſaid the queen-dauphin

ſmiling,

ſmiling, and turned to the duke de Nemours: he was dreſſed for the evening-aſſembly, and taking up the diſcourſe with that grace which was natural to him, I believe, madam, ſays he, I may venture to think you were ſpeaking of me as I came in, that you had a deſign to aſk me ſomething, and that madam de Cleves is againſt it.---It is true, replied the queen-dauphin, but I ſhall not be ſo complaiſant to her on this occaſion as I was uſed to be; I would know of you, whether a ſtory I have been told is true, and whether you are not the perſon who is in love with, and beloved by a lady of the court, who endeavours to conceal her paſſion from you, and has confeſſed it to her huſband?

The concern and confuſion madam de Cleves was in was above all that can be imagined; and if death itſelf could have drawn her out of this condition, ſhe would have gladly embraced it; but the duke de Nemours was yet more embarraſſed, if poſſible: the diſcourſe of the queen-dauphin, by whom he had reaſon to believe he was not hated, in the preſence of madam de Cleves, who was confided in by her more than any body of the court, and who confided more in her, threw him into ſuch confuſion and extravagance of thought, that it was impoſſible for him to be maſter of his countenance: the concern he ſaw madam de Cleves in through his fault, and the thought of having given her juſt cauſe to hate him, ſo ſhocked him, he could not ſpeak a word. The queen-dauphin, ſeeing how thunderſtruck ſhe was, Look upon him, look upon him! ſaid ſhe to madam de Cleves, and judge if this adventure be not his own.

In the mean time the duke de Nemours, finding of what importance it was to him to extricate himſelf out of ſo dangerous a difficulty, recovered himſelf from his firſt ſurprize, and became at once maſter of his wit and looks. I acknowledge, madam, ſaid he, it is impoſſible to be more ſurpriſed and concerned than I was at the treachery of the viſcount de Chartres, in relating

an adventure of a friend of mine, which I had in confidence imparted to him. I know how to be revenged of him, continued he, ſmiling with a calm air; which removed the ſuſpicions the queen-dauphin had entertained of him: he has entruſted me with things of no very ſmall importance; but I do not know, madam, why you do me the honour to make me a party in this affair. The viſcount cannot ſay I am concerned in it, for I told him the contrary; I may very well be taken to be a man in love, but I cannot believe, madam, you will think me of the number of thoſe who are loved again. The duke was glad to ſay any thing to the queen-dauphin, which alluded to the inclination he had expreſſed for her formerly, in order to divert her thoughts from the ſubject in queſtion. She imagined ſhe underſtood well enough the drift of what he ſaid; but without making any anſwer to it, ſhe continued to rally him upon the embarraſſment he was in. I was concerned, madam, ſaid he, for the intereſt of my friend, and on account of the juſt reproaches he might make me for having told a ſecret which is dearer to him than life. He has, nevertheleſs, entruſted me but with one half of it, and has not told me the name of the perſon he loves; all I know is, that he is the moſt deeply in love of any man in the world, and has the moſt reaſon to complain.---Do you think he has reaſon to complain, replied the queen-dauphin, when he is loved again?---Do you believe he is, madam, replied he, and that a perſon who had a real paſſion could diſcover it to her huſband? That lady, doubtleſs, is not acquainted with love, and has miſtaken for it a ſlight acknowledgment of the fondneſs her lover had for her. My friend cannot flatter himſelf with the leaſt hopes; but, unfortunate as he is, he thinks himſelf happy, at leaſt, in having made her afraid of falling in love with him, and he would not change his condition for that of the happieſt lover in the world.---Your friend has a paſſion very eaſy to be ſatisfied, ſaid the queen-dauphin,

and

and I begin to believe it is not yourſelf you are ſpeaking of; I am almoſt, continued ſhe, of the opinion of madam de Cleves, who maintains that this ſtory cannot be true.---I do not really believe it can be true, anſwered madam de Cleves, who had been ſilent hitherto; and though it were poſſible to be true, how ſhould it have been known? It is very unlikely that a woman, capable of ſo extraordinary a reſolution, would have the weakneſs to publiſh it; and ſurely her huſband would not have told it neither, or he muſt be a huſband very unworthy to have been dealt with in ſo generous a manner. The duke de Nemours, who perceived the ſuſpicions madam de Cleves had of her huſband, was glad to confirm her in them, knowing he was the moſt formidable rival he had to overcome. Jealouſy, ſaid he, and a curioſity perhaps of knowing more than a wife has thought fit to diſcover, may make a huſband do a great many imprudent things.

Madam de Cleves was put to the laſt proof of her power and courage; and not being able to endure the converſation any longer, ſhe was going to ſay ſhe was not well, when, by good fortune for her, the ducheſs of Valentinois came in, and told the queen-dauphin that the king was juſt coming; the queen-dauphin went into the cloſet to dreſs herſelf, and the duke de Nemours came up to madam de Cleves as ſhe was following her. I would give my life, madam, ſaid he, to have a moment's converſation with you; but though I have a world of important things to ſay to you, I think nothing is more ſo, than to entreat you to believe, that if I have ſaid any thing in which the queen-dauphin may ſeem concerned, I did it for reaſons which do not relate to her. Madam de Cleves pretended not to hear him, and left him without a look, and went towards the king, who was juſt come in. As there were abundance of people there, ſhe trod upon her gown, and made a falſe ſtep, which ſerved her as an excuſe to go out of a place ſhe had not the power to ſtay in; and

ſo pretending to have received ſome hurt, ſhe went home.

Monſieur de Cleves came to the Louvre, and was ſurpriſed not to find his wife there; they told him of the accident that had befallen her, and he went immediately home to enquire after her; he found her in bed, and perceived her hurt was not conſiderable. When he had been ſome time with her, he found her ſo exceſſive melancholy that he was ſurpriſed at it: What ails you, madam? ſays he; you ſeem to have ſome other grief than that which you complain of.---I feel the moſt ſenſible grief I can ever experience, anſwered ſhe; what uſe have you made of that extraordinary, or rather fooliſh confidence which I placed in you? Did not I deſerve to have my ſecret kept? and though I had not deſerved it, did not your own intereſt engage you to it? Should your curioſity to know a name it was not reaſonable for me to tell you, have obliged you to make a confidante to aſſiſt you in the diſcovery, nothing but that curioſity could have made you guilty of ſo cruel an indiſcretion; the conſequences of it are as bad as they poſſibly can be. This adventure is known, and I have been told it by thoſe who are not aware that I am principally concerned in it.---What do you ſay, madam? anſwered he; you accuſe me of having told what paſſed between you and me, and you inform me that the thing is known; I do not go about to clear myſelf from this charge, you cannot think me guilty of it; without doubt you have applied to yourſelf what was told you of ſome other.---Ah! ſir, replied ſhe, the world has not an adventure like mine, there is not another woman capable of ſuch a thing: the ſtory I have heard could not have been invented by chance; nobody could imagine any like it; an action of this nature never entered any thoughts but mine. The queen-dauphin has juſt told me the ſtory; ſhe had it from the viſcount de Chartres, and the viſcount from the duke de Nemours.---The duke de Nemours! cried

monſieur

monſieur de Cleves, like a man tranſported and deſperate: How! does the duke de Nemours know that you are in love with him, and that I am acquainted with it? ---You are always for ſingling out the duke de Nemours rather than any other, replied ſhe; I have told you I will never anſwer you concerning your ſuſpicions: I am ignorant whether the duke de Nemours knows the part I have in this adventure, and that which you have aſcribed to him; but he told it to the viſcount de Chartres, and ſaid he had it from one of his friends, who did not name the lady: this friend of the duke de Nemours muſt needs be one of yours, whom you entruſted the ſecret to, in order to clear up your ſuſpicions. ---Can one have a friend in the world, in whom one would repoſe ſuch a confidence, replied monſieur de Cleves; and would a man clear his ſupicions at the price of informing another with what one would wiſh to conceal from one's ſelf? Think rather, madam, to whom you have ſpoken; it is more probable this ſecret ſhould have eſcaped you than me; you was not able alone to ſupport the trouble you found yourſelf in, and you endeavoured to comfort yourſelf by complaining to ſome confidante, who has betrayed you.---Do not wholly deſtroy me, cried ſhe, and be not ſo hard-hearted as to accuſe me of a fault you have committed yourſelf: can you ſuſpect me of it? and do you think, becauſe I was capable of informing you of this matter, I was therefore capable of informing another?

The confeſſion which madam de Cleves had made to her huſband was ſo great a mark of her ſincerity, and ſhe ſo ſtrongly denied that ſhe had intruſted it to any other, that monſieur de Cleves did not know what to think. On the other hand, he was ſure he had never ſaid any thing of it; it was a thing that could not have been gueſſed, and yet it was known; it muſt therefore come from one of them two; but what grieved him moſt was, to know that this ſecret was in the hands of

ſomebody

ſomebody elſe, and that, in all probability, it would be ſoon divulged.

Madam de Cleves thought much after the ſame manner; ſhe found it equally impoſſible that her huſband ſhould, or ſhould not have ſpoken of it. What the duke de Nemours had ſaid to her, that curioſity might make a huſband do indiſcreet things, ſeemed ſo juſtly applicable to monſieur de Cleves's condition, that ſhe could not think he ſaid it by chance; and the probability of this made her conclude, that monſieur de Cleves had abuſed the confidence ſhe had placed in him. They were ſo taken up, the one and the other, with their reſpective thoughts, that they continued ſilent a great while; and when they broke from this ſilence, they only repeated the ſame things they had already ſaid very often; their hearts and affections grew more and more eſtranged from each other.

It is eaſy to imagine how they paſſed the night; monſieur de Cleves could no longer ſuſtain the misfortune of ſeeing a woman, whom he adored, in love with another; he grew quite heartleſs, and thought he had reaſon to be ſo in an affair where his honour and reputation were ſo deeply wounded: he knew not what to think of his wife, and was at a loſs what conduct he ſhould preſcribe to her, or what he ſhould follow himſelf; he ſaw nothing on all ſides but precipices and rocks: at laſt, after having been long toſſed to and fro in ſuſpenſe, he conſidered he was ſoon to ſet out for Spain, and reſolved to do nothing which might encreaſe the ſuſpicion or knowledge of his unfortunate condition. He went to his wife, and told her, that what they had to do was not to debate between themſelves who had diſcovered the ſecret; but to make it appear, that the ſtory which was got abroad, was a buſineſs in which ſhe had no concern; that it depended upon her to convince the duke of Nemours and others of it; that ſhe had nothing to do but to behave herſelf to him with that coldneſs and reſerve which ſhe ought to

have

have for a man who profeſſed love to her; that by this proceeding ſhe would eaſily remove the opinion he entertained of her being in love with him; and therefore ſhe needed not to trouble herſelf as to what he might hitherto have thought, ſince, if for the future ſhe diſcovered no weakneſs, his former thoughts would vaniſh of themſelves; and that eſpecially ſhe ought to frequent the Louvre and the aſſemblies as uſual.

Having ſaid this, monſieur de Cleves left his wife without waiting her anſwer; ſhe thought what he ſaid very reaſonable, and the reſentment ſhe had againſt the duke de Nemours, made her believe ſhe ſhould be able to comply with it with a great deal of eaſe; but it ſeemed a hard taſk to her to appear at the marriage with that freedom and tranquillity of ſpirit which the occaſion required. Nevertheleſs, as ſhe was to carry the queen-dauphin's train, and had been diſtinguiſhed with that honour in preference to a great many other princeſſes, it was impoſſible to excuſe herſelf from it, without making a great deal of noiſe, and putting people upon enquiring into the reaſons of it. She reſolved therefore to do her utmoſt, and employed the reſt of the day in preparing herſelf for it, and in endeavouring to forget the thoughts that gave her ſo much uneaſineſs; and to this purpoſe ſhe locked herſelf up in her cloſet: of all her griefs the moſt violent was, that ſhe had reaſon to complain of the duke de Nemours, and could find no excuſe to urge in his favour; ſhe could not doubt but he had related this adventure to the viſcount de Chartres; he had owned it himſelf; nor could ſhe any more doubt, from his manner of ſpeaking of it, but that he knew the adventure related to her; how could ſhe excuſe ſo great an imprudence? and what was become of that extreme diſcretion which ſhe had ſo much admired in this prince? He was diſcreet, ſaid ſhe, while he was unhappy; but the thought of being happy, though on uncertain grounds, has put an end to his diſcretion; he could not conſider that he was beloved, without deſiring to have it known; he

he ſaid every thing he could ſay; I never acknowledged it was he I was in love with; he ſuſpected it, and has declared his ſuſpicions; if he had been ſure of it, he might have acted as he has; I was to blame for thinking him a man capable of concealing what flattered his vanity; and yet it is for this man, whom I thought ſo different from other men, that I am become like other women, who was ſo unlike them before. I have loſt the heart and eſteem of a huſband who ought to have been my happineſs; I ſhall ſoon be looked upon by all the world as a perſon led away by an idle and violent paſſion. He for whom I entertain this paſſion is no longer ignorant of it; and it was to avoid theſe misfortunes that I hazarded my quiet, and even my life. Theſe ſad reflections were followed by a torrent of tears; but however great her grief was, ſhe plainly perceived ſhe ſhould be able to ſupport it, were ſhe but ſatisfied in the duke de Nemours.

The duke was no leſs uneaſy than ſhe; the indiſcretion he had been guilty of in telling what he did to the viſcount de Chartres, and the miſchievous conſequences of it, vexed him to the heart; he could not repreſent to himſelf the affliction and ſorrow he had ſeen madam de Cleves in, without being pierced with anguiſh; he was inconſolable for having ſaid things to her about this adventure, which, though galant enough in themſelves, ſeemed on this occaſion too groſs and unpolite, ſince they gave madam de Cleves to underſtand, he was not ignorant that ſhe was the woman who had that violent paſſion, and that he was the object of it. It was before the utmoſt of his wiſhes to have a converſation with her; but now he found he ought rather to fear than deſire it. What ſhould I ſay to her? ſays he; ſhould I go to diſcover further to her what I have made her too ſenſible of already? Shall I tell her I know ſhe loves me? I, who have never dared to ſay I loved her? Shall I begin with ſpeaking openly of my paſſion, that ſhe may ſee my hopes have inſpired me with boldneſs? Can I even think

think of approaching her, and of giving her the trouble to endure my ſight? Which way could I juſtify myſelf? I have no excuſe; I am unworthy of the leaſt regard from madam de Cleves, and I even deſpair of her ever looking upon me: I have given her, by my own fault, better means of defending herſelf againſt me than any ſhe was ſearching for, and perhaps ſearching for to no purpoſe. I loſe by my imprudence the glory and happineſs of being loved by the moſt beautiful and deſerving lady in the world; but if I had loſt this happineſs, without involving her in the moſt extreme grief and ſufferings at the ſame time, I ſhould have had ſome comfort; for at this moment I am more ſenſible of the harm I have done her, than of that I have done myſelf in forfeiting her favour.

The duke de Nemours continued turning the ſame thoughts over and over, and tormenting himſelf a great while: the deſire he had to ſpeak to madam de Cleves came conſtantly into his mind; he thought of the means to do it; he thought of writing to her; but at laſt he found, conſidering the fault he had committed, and the temper ſhe was in, his beſt way was to ſhew her a profound reſpect by his affliction and his ſilence, to let her ſee he durſt not preſent himſelf before her, and to wait for what time, chance, and the inclination ſhe had for him, might produce to his advantage: he reſolved alſo not to reproach the viſcount de Chartres for his unfaithfulneſs, for fear of confirming his ſuſpicions.

The preparations for the eſpouſals and marriage of Madame on the next day, ſo entirely took up the thoughts of the court, that madam de Cleves and the duke of Nemours eaſily concealed from the public their grief and uneaſineſs. The queen-dauphin ſpoke but ſlightly to madam de Cleves of the converſation they had had with the duke de Nemours; and monſieur de Cleves induſtriouſly ſhunned ſpeaking to his wife of what was paſt; ſo that ſhe did not find herſelf under ſo much embarraſſment as ſhe had imagined.

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The eſpouſals were ſolemnized at the Louvre; and after the feaſt and ball all the royal family went to lie at the biſhop's palace, according to cuſtom. In the morning, the duke of Alva, who always had appeared very plainly dreſt, put on a habit of cloth of gold, mixed with flame-colour, yellow and black, all covered over with jewels, and wore a cloſe crown on his head. The prince of Orange very richly dreſſed alſo, with his liveries, and all the Spaniards with theirs, came to attend the duke of Alva from the Hotel de Villeroy where he lodged, and ſet out, marching four by four, till they came to the biſhop's palace. As ſoon as he was arrived, they went in order to the church; the king led Madame, who wore alſo a cloſe crown, her train being borne by mademoiſelles de Montpenſier and Longueville; the queen came next, but without a crown; after her followed the queen-dauphin, Madame, the king's ſiſter, the ducheſs of Loraine, and the queen of Navarre, their trains being borne by the princeſſes; the queens and the princeſſes were all of them attended with their maids of honour, who were richly dreſt in the ſame colour which they wore themſelves; ſo that it was known by the colour of their habits whoſe maids they were: they mounted the place that was prepared in the church, and there the marriage-ceremonies were performed; they returned afterwards to dine at the biſhop's, and went from thence about five a-clock to the palace where the feaſt was, and where the parliament, the ſovereign courts, and the corporation of the city were deſired to aſſiſt. The king, the queens, the princes and princeſſes ſat at the marble table in the great hall of the palace; the duke of Alva ſat near the new queen of Spain, below the ſteps of the marble table; and at the king's right hand was a table for the ambaſſadors, the archbiſhops, and the knights of the order, and on the other ſide one for the parliament.

The duke of Guiſe, dreſt in a robe of cloth of gold friezed, ſerved the king as great chamberlain; the prince

prince of Conde as ſteward of the houſhold, and the duke de Nemours as cup-bearer. After the tables were removed the ball began, and was interrupted by interludes and a great deal of extraordinary machinery; then the ball was reſumed, and after midnight the king and the whole court returned to the Louvre. However full of grief madam de Cleves was, ſhe appeared in the eyes of all beholders, and particularly in thoſe of the duke de Nemours, incomparably beautiful. He durſt not ſpeak to her, though the hurry of the ceremony gave him frequent opportunities; but he expreſſed ſo much ſorrow, and ſo reſpectful a fear of approaching her, that ſhe no longer thought him to blame, though he had ſaid nothing in his juſtification; his conduct was the ſame the following days, and wrought the ſame effect on the heart of madam de Cleves.

At laſt, the day of the tournament came; the queens were placed in the galleries that were prepared for them; the four champions appeared at the end of the liſts with a number of horſes and liveries, the moſt magnificent ſight that ever was ſeen in France.

The king's colours were white and black, which he always wore in honour of the ducheſs of Valentinois, who was a widow. The duke of Ferrara and his retinue had yellow and red; monſieur de Guiſe's carnation and white. It was not known at firſt for what reaſon he wore thoſe colours; but it was ſoon remembered that they were the colours of a beautiful young lady whom he had been in love with while ſhe was a maid, and whom he yet loved, though he durſt not ſhewit. The duke de Nemours had yellow and black; why he had them could not be found out: madam de Cleves only knew the reaſon of it; ſhe remembered to have ſaid before him ſhe loved yellow, and that ſhe was ſorry her complexion did not ſuit that colour. As for the duke, he thought he might take that colour without any indiſcretion, ſince, not being worn by madam de Cleves, it could not be ſuſpected to be her's.

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The four champions ſhewed the greateſt addreſs that can be imagined; though the king was the beſt horſeman in his kingdom, it was hard to ſay which of them moſt excelled. The duke de Nemours had a grace in all his actions which might have inclined to his favour perſons leſs intereſted than madam de Cleves. She no ſooner ſaw him appear at the end of the liſts, but her heart felt uncommon emotions, and every courſe he made ſhe could ſcarce hide her joy, when he had ſucceſsfully finiſhed his career.

In the evening, when all was almoſt over, and the company ready to break up, ſo it was for the misfortune of the ſtate, that the king would needs break another lance; he ſent orders to the count de Montgomery, who was a very dexterous combatant, to appear in the liſts. The count begged the king to excuſe him, and alledged all the reaſons for it he could think of; but the king, almoſt angry, ſent him word he abſolutely commanded him to do it. The queen conjured the king not to run any more, told him he had performed ſo well that he ought to be ſatisfied, and deſired him to go with her to her apartments. He made anſwer, It was for her ſake that he would run again; and entered the barrier. She ſent the duke of Savoy to him to entreat him a ſecond time to return, but to no purpoſe. He ran; the lances were broke, and a ſplinter of the count de Montgomery's lance hit the king's eye, and ſtuck there. The king fell; his gentlemen and monſieur de Montmorency, who was one of the mareſchals of the field, ran to him; they were aſtoniſhed to ſee him wounded; but the king was not at all diſheartened; he ſaid, that it was but a ſlight hurt, and that he forgave the count de Montgomery. One may imagine what ſorrow and affliction ſo fatal an accident occaſioned on a day ſet apart to mirth and joy. The king was carried to bed, and the ſurgeons having examined his wound found it very conſiderable. The conſtable immediately called to mind the prediction which had been told the king, that he ſhould

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be killed in ſingle fight; and he made no doubt but the prediction would be now accompliſhed.

The king of Spain, who was then at Bruſſels, being advertiſed of this accident, ſent his phyſician, who was a man of great reputation; but that phyſician judged the king paſt hope.

A court ſo divided, and filled with ſo many oppoſite intereſts, could not but be in great agitation on the breaking out of ſo grand an event; nevertheleſs, all things were kept quiet, and nothing was ſeen but a general anxiety for the king's health: the queens, the princes and princeſſes hardly ever went out of his antichamber.

Madam de Cleves knowing that ſhe was obliged to be there, that ſhe ſhould ſee there the duke de Nemours, and that ſhe could not conceal from her huſband the diſorder ſhe ſhould be in upon ſeeing him; and being ſenſible alſo, that the mere preſence of that prince would juſtify him in her eyes, and deſtroy all her reſolutions, thought proper to feign herſelf ill. The court was too buſy to give attention to her conduct, or to enquire whether her illneſs was real or counterfeit; her huſband alone was able to come at the truth of the matter; but ſhe was not at all averſe to his knowing it. Thus ſhe continued at home, altogether heedleſs of the great change that was ſoon expected, and full of her own thoughts, which ſhe was at full liberty to give herſelf up to. Every one went to court to enquire after the king's health, and monſieur de Cleves came home at certain times to give her an account of it; he behaved himſelf to her in the ſame manner he uſed to do, except when they were alone; and then there appeared ſomething of coldneſs and reſerve: he had not ſpoke to her again concerning what had paſt, nor had ſhe power, nor did ſhe think it convenient, to reſume the diſcourſe.

The duke de Nemours, who had waited for an opportunity of ſpeaking to madam de Cleves, was ſurprized and afflicted not to have had ſo much as the pleaſure to

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ſee her. The king's illneſs encreaſed ſo much, that the ſeventh day he was given over by the phyſicians; he received the news of the certainty of his death with an uncommon firmneſs of mind; which was the more to be admired, conſidering that he loſt his life by ſo unfortunate an accident, that he died in the flower of his age, happy, adored by his people, and beloved by a miſtreſs he was deſperately in love with. The evening before his death he cauſed Madame, his ſiſter, to be married to the duke of Savoy without ceremony: one may judge what condition the ducheſs of Valentinois was in; the queen would not permit her to ſee the king, but ſent to demand of her the king's ſignets, and the jewels of the crown which ſhe had in her cuſtody. The ducheſs enquired if the king was dead; and being anſwered, No; I have then as yet no other maſter, ſaid ſhe, and nobody can oblige me to reſtore what he has truſted in my hands. As ſoon as the king expired at Chateau de Tournelles, the duke of Ferrara, the duke of Guiſe, and the duke de Nemours conducted the queen-mother, the new king and the queen-conſort to the Louvre. The duke de Nemours led the queen-mother. As they began to march, ſhe ſtepped back a little, and told the queen, her daughter-in-law, it was her place to go firſt; but it was eaſy to ſee, that there was more of ſpleen than decorum in this compliment.

PART IV.

THE Queen-mother was now wholly governed by the cardinal of Loraine; the viſcount de Chartres had no intereſt with her, and the paſſion he had for madam de Martigues and for liberty, hindered him from feeling this loſs as it deſerved to be felt. The cardinal, during the

the ten days illneſs of the king, was at leiſure to form his deſigns, and lead the queen into reſolutions agreeable to what he had projected; ſo that the king was no ſooner dead, but the queen ordered the conſtable to ſtay at Tournelles, with the corpſe of the deceaſed king, in order to perform the uſual ceremonies. This commiſſion kept him at a diſtance, and out of the ſcene of action: for this reaſon the conſtable diſpatched a courier to the king of Navarre, to haſten him to court, that they might join their intereſt to oppoſe the great riſe of the houſe of Guiſe. The command of the army was given to the duke of Guiſe, and the care of the finances to the cardinal of Loraine. The ducheſs of Valentinois was driven from court; the cardinal de Tournon, the conſtable's declared enemy, and the chancellor Olivier, the declared enemy of the ducheſs of Valentinois, were both recalled. In a word, the complexion of the court was entirely changed; the duke of Guiſe took the ſame rank as the princes of the blood, in carrying the king's mantle at the funeral ceremonies: he and his brothers carried all before them at court, not only by reaſon of the cardinal's power with the queen-mother, but becauſe ſhe thought it in her power to remove them, ſhould they give her umbrage; whereas ſhe could not ſo eaſily remove the conſtable, who was ſupported by the princes of the blood.

When the ceremonial of the mourning was over, the conſtable came to the Louvre, and was very coldly received by the king. He deſired to ſpeak with him in private; but the king called for meſſieurs de Guiſe, and told him before them, that he adviſed him to live at eaſe; that the finances and the command of the army were diſpoſed of, and that when he had occaſion for his advice, he would ſend for him to court. The queen received him in a yet colder manner than the king, and ſhe even reproached him for having told the late king, that his children by her did not reſemble him. The king of Navarre arrived, and was no better received;

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the prince of Conde, more impatient than his brother, complained aloud, but to no purpoſe: he was removed from court, under pretence of being ſent to Flanders to ſign the ratification of the peace. They ſhewed the king of Navarre a forged letter from the king of Spain, which charged him with a deſign of ſeizing that king's fortreſſes; they put him in fear for his dominions, and made him take a reſolution to go to Bearn; the queen furniſhed him with an opportunity, by appointing him to conduct madam Elizabeth, and obliged him to ſet out before her; ſo that there remained no body at court that could balance the power of the houſe of Guiſe.

Though it was a mortifying circumſtance for monſieur de Cleves not to conduct madam Elizabeth; yet he could not complain of it, by reaſon of the greatneſs of the perſon preferred before him; he regretted the loſs of his employment not ſo much on account of the honour he ſhould have received from it, as becauſe it would have given him an opportunity of removing his wife from court, without the appearance of deſign in it.

A few days after the king's death, it was reſolved the new king ſhould go to Rheims to be crowned. As ſoon as this journey was talked of, madam de Cleves, who had ſtaid at home all this while under pretence of illneſs, entreated her huſband to diſpenſe with her following the court, and to give her leave to go to take the air at Colomiers for her health: he anſwered, That whether her health was the reaſon or not of her deſire, however, he conſented to it: nor was it very difficult for him to conſent to a thing he had reſolved upon before: as good an opinion as he had of his wife's virtue, he thought it imprudent to expoſe her any longer to the ſight of a man ſhe was in love with.

The duke de Nemours was ſoon informed, that madam de Cleves was not to go along with the court; he could not find in his heart to ſet out without ſeeing her, and therefore, the night before his journey, he went to her

her house as late as decency would allow him, in order to find her alone. Fortune favoured his intention; and madam de Nevers and madam de Martigues, whom he met in the court as they were coming out, informed him they had left her alone. He went up in a concern and ferment of mind to be paralleled only by that which madam de Cleves was under, when she was told the duke de Nemours was come to see her. The fear lest he should speak to her of his passion, and lest she should answer him too favourably; the uneasiness this visit might give her husband; the difficulty of giving him an account of it, or of concealing it from him; all these things presented themselves to her imagination at once, and threw her into so great an embarrassment, that she resolved to avoid the thing of the world which perhaps she wished for the most. She sent one of her women to the duke de Nemours, who was in her anti-chamber, to tell him that she had lately been very ill, and that she was sorry she could not receive the honour which he designed her. What an affliction was it to the duke not to see madam de Cleves, and therefore not to see her, because she had no mind he should! He was to go away the next morning, and had nothing further to hope from Fortune. He had said nothing to her since that conversation at the queen-dauphin's apartments, and he had reason to believe that this imprudence in telling the viscount his adventure had destroyed all his expectations; in a word, he went away with every thing that could exasperate his grief.

No sooner was madam de Cleves recovered from the confusion which the thought of receiving a visit from the duke had given her, but all the reasons which had made her refuse it vanished; she was even satisfied she had been to blame; and had she dared, or had it not been too late, she would have had him called back.

Madam de Nevers and madam de Martigues went from the princess of Cleves to the queen-dauphin's, where they found monsieur de Cleves. The queen-

dauphin aſked them from whence they came; they ſaid they came from madam de Cleves, where they had ſpent part of the afternoon with a great deal of company, and that they had left nobody there but the duke de Nemours. Theſe words, which they thought ſo indifferent, were not ſuch with monſieur de Cleves: though he might well imagine the duke de Nemours had frequent opportunities of ſpeaking to his wife, yet the thought that he was now with her, that he was there alone, and that he might ſpeak to her of his love, appeared to him at this time a thing ſo new and inſupportable, that jealouſy kindled in his heart with greater violence than ever. It was impoſſible for him to ſtay at the queen's; he returned from thence, without knowing why he returned, or if he deſigned to go and interrupt the duke de Nemours. He was no ſooner come home, but he looked about him to ſee if there was any thing by which he could judge if the duke was ſtill there; it was ſome comfort to him to find he was gone, and it was a pleaſure to reflect that he could not have been long there: he fancied, that, perhaps, it was not the duke de Nemours of whom he had reaſon to be jealous; and though he did not doubt of it, yet he endeavoured to doubt of it; but he was convinced of it by ſo many circumſtances, that he continued not long in that pleaſing uncertainty. He immediately went into his wife's room, and after having talked to her for ſome time about indifferent matters, he could not forbear aſking her what ſhe had done? and who ſhe had ſeen? And accordingly ſhe gave him an account. When he found ſhe did not name the duke de Nemours, he aſked her trembling, if thoſe were all ſhe had ſeen, in order to give her an occaſion to name the duke, and that he might not have the grief to ſee ſhe made uſe of any evaſion. As ſhe had not ſeen him, ſhe did not name him; when monſieur de Cleves with accents of ſorrow ſaid, And have you not ſeen the duke de Nemours? or, Have you forgot him?---I have not ſeen him, indeed, anſwered

anſwered ſhe. I was ill, and ſent one of my women to make my excuſes.---You was ill then only for him, replied monſieur de Cleves, ſince you admitted the viſits of others: Why this diſtinction with reſpect to the duke de Nemours? Why is not he to you as another man? Why ſhould you be afraid of ſeeing him? Why do you let him perceive that you are ſo? Why do you ſhew him, that you make uſe of the power which his paſſion gives you over him? Would you dare refuſe to ſee him, but that you know he diſtinguiſhes your rigour from incivility? But why ſhould you exerciſe that rigour towards him? From a perſon like you, all things are favours, except indifference.---I did not think, replied madam de Cleves, whatever ſuſpicions you have of the duke de Nemours, that you could reproach me for not admitting a viſit from him.---But I do reproach you, madam, replied he, and I have good ground for ſo doing; why ſhould you not ſee him, if he has ſaid nothing to you? But, madam, he has ſpoke to you; if his paſſion had been expreſſed only by ſilence, it would not have made ſo great an impreſſion upon you; you have not thought fit to tell me the whole truth; you have concealed the greateſt part from me; you have repented even of the little you have acknowledged; and you have not the reſolution to go on; I am more unhappy than I imagined, more unhappy than any other man in the world. You are my wife; I love you as my miſtreſs, and ſee you at the ſame time in love with another, with the moſt amiable man of the court; and he ſees you every day, and knows you are in love with him: Alas! I believed that you would conquer your paſſion for him; but ſure I had loſt my reaſon when I believed it was poſſible.---I do not know, replied madam de Cleves very ſorrowfully, whether you was to blame in judging favourably of ſo extraordinary a proceeding as mine; nor do I know if I was not miſtaken, when I thought you would do me juſtice. ---Doubt it not, madam, replied monſieur de Cleves,

you was miſtaken; you expected from me things as impoſſible as thoſe I expected from you: How could you hope I ſhould continue maſter of my reaſon? Had you forgot that I was deſperately in love with you, and that I was your huſband? Either of theſe two circumſtances is enough to hurry a man into extremities. What may they not do both together? Alas! What do they not do? My thoughts are violent and uncertain, and I am not able to controul them; I no longer think myſelf worthy of you, nor do I think you are worthy of me; I adore you, I hate you; I offend you, I aſk your pardon; I admire you, I bluſh for my admiration: in a word, I have nothing of tranquillity or reaſon left about me. I wonder how I have been able to live ſince you ſpoke to me at Colomiers, and ſince you learned, from what the queen-dauphin told you, that your adventure was known; I cannot diſcover how it came to be known, nor what paſſed between the duke de Nemours and you upon that ſubject; you will never explain it to me, nor do I deſire you to do it; I only deſire you to remember, that you have made me the moſt unfortunate, the moſt wretched of men.

Having ſpoke theſe words, monſieur de Cleves left his wife, and ſet out the next day without ſeeing her; but he writ her a letter full of ſorrow, and at the ſame time very kind and obliging. She gave an anſwer to it ſo moving, and ſo full of aſſurances both as to her paſt and future conduct, that as thoſe aſſurances were grounded in truth, and were the real effect of her ſentiments, the letter made great impreſſions on monſieur de Cleves, and gave him ſome tranquillity; add to this, that the duke de Nemours, going to the king as well as himſelf, he had the ſatisfaction to know that he would not be in the ſame place with madam de Cleves. Every time that lady ſpoke to her huſband, the paſſion he expreſſed for her, the handſomeneſs of his behaviour, the friendſhip ſhe had for him, and the thought of what ſhe owed him, made impreſſions in her heart that weakened the

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idea of the duke de Nemours: but it did not continue long; that idea ſoon returned more lively than before.

For a few days after the duke was gone, ſhe was hardly ſenſible of his abſence; afterwards it tortured her: ever ſince ſhe had been in love with him, there did not paſs a day, but ſhe either feared or wiſhed to meet him; and it was a wounding thought to her to conſider, that it was no more in the power of Fortune to contrive their meeting.

She went to Colomiers, and ordered to be carried thither the large pictures ſhe had cauſed to be copied from the originals which the ducheſs of Valentinois had procured to be drawn for her fine houſe of Annet. All the remarkable actions that had paſt in the late king's reign were repreſented in theſe pieces, and among the reſt was the ſiege of Metz; and all thoſe who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves at that ſiege were painted much to the life. The duke de Nemours was of this number; and it was that, perhaps, which had made madam de Cleves deſirous of having the pictures.

Madam de Martigues not being able to go along with the court, promiſed her to come and paſs ſome days at Colomiers. Though they divided the queen's favour, they lived together without envy or coldneſs; they were friends, but not confidantes: Madam de Cleves knew that madam de Martigues was in love with the viſcount; but madam de Martigues did not know that madam de Cleves was in love with the duke de Nemours, nor that ſhe was beloved by him. The relation madam de Cleves had to the viſcount, made her more dear to madam de Martigues; and madam de Cleves was alſo fond of her as a perſon who was in love as well as herſelf, and with an intimate friend of her own lover.

Madam de Martigues came to Colomiers according to her promiſe, and found madam de Cleves living in a very ſolitary manner: that princeſs affected a perfect ſolitude, and paſſed the evenings in her garden, without being accompanied even by her domeſticks; ſhe fre-

quently came into the pavilion where the duke de Nemours had overheard her converſation with her huſband; ſhe delighted to be in the bower that was open to the garden, while her women and attendants waited in the other bower under the pavillion, and never came to her but when ſhe called them. Madam de Martigues having never ſeen Colomiers, was ſurprized at the extraordinary beauty of it, and particularly with the pleaſantneſs of the pavilion. Madam de Cleves and ſhe uſually paſſed the evenings there. The liberty of being alone in the night in ſo agreeable a place, would not permit the converſation to end ſoon between two young ladies, whoſe hearts were enflamed with violent paſſions; and they took great pleaſure in converſing together, though they were not confidantes. Madam de Martigues would have left Colomiers with great reluctance, had ſhe not quitted it to go to a place where the viſcount was: ſhe ſet out for Chambort, the court being there.

The king had been anointed at Rheims by the cardinal of Loraine, and the deſign was to paſs the reſt of the ſummer at the caſtle of Chambort, which was newly built. The queen expreſſed a great deal of joy upon ſeeing madam de Martigues again at court; and after having given her ſeveral proofs of it, ſhe aſked her how madam de Cleves did, and in what manner ſhe paſſed her time in the country. The duke de Nemours and the prince of Cleves were with the queen at that time. Madam de Martigues, who had been charmed with Colomiers, related all the beauties of it, and enlarged extremely on the deſcription of the pavilion in the foreſt, and on the pleaſure madam de Cleves took in walking there alone part of the night. The duke de Nemours, who knew the place well enough to underſtand what madam de Martigues ſaid of it, thought it was not impoſſible to ſee madam de Cleves there, without being ſeen by any body but her. He aſked madam de Martigues ſome queſtions to get further lights; and

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the prince of Cleves, who had ey'd him very ſtrictly while madam de Martigues was ſpeaking, thought he knew what his deſign was. The queſtions the duke aſked ſtill more confirmed him in that thought, ſo that he made no doubt but his intention was to go and ſee his wife; he was not miſtaken in his ſuſpicions. This deſign entered ſo deeply into the duke de Nemours's mind, that after having ſpent the night in conſidering the proper methods to execute it, he went betimes the next morning to aſk the king's leave to go to Paris, on ſome pretended occaſion.

Monſieur de Cleves was in no doubt concerning the occaſion of his journey; and he reſolved to inform himſelf as to his wife's conduct, and to continue no longer in ſo cruel an uncertainty; he had a deſire to ſet out the ſame time as the duke de Nemours did, and to hide himſelf where he might diſcover the ſucceſs of the journey; but fearing his departure might appear extraordinary, and leſt the duke, being advertiſed of it, might take other meaſures, he reſolved to truſt this buſineſs to a gentleman of his, whoſe fidelity and wit he was aſſured of: he related to him the embarraſſment he was under, and what the virtue of his wife had been till that time; and ordered him to follow the duke de Nemours, to watch him narrowly, to ſee if he did not go to Colomiers, and if he did not enter the garden in the night.

The gentleman, who was very capable of this commiſſion, acquitted himſelf of it with all the exactneſs imaginable. He followed the duke to a village within half a league of Colomiers, where the duke ſtopped; and the gentleman eaſily gueſſed his meaning was to ſtay there till night. He did not think it convenient to wait there, but paſſed on, and placed himſelf in that part of the foreſt where he thought the duke would paſs. He took his meaſures very right; for it was no ſooner night, but he heard ſomebody coming that way; and though it was dark, he eaſily knew the duke de Ne-

mours; he ſaw him walk round the garden, as with a deſign to liſten if he could hear any body, and to chuſe the moſt convenient place to enter: the paliſades were very high and double, in order to prevent people from coming in, ſo that it was very difficult for the duke to get over; however, he made a ſhift to do it. He was no ſooner in the garden, but he diſcovered where madam de Cleves was; he ſaw a great light in the bower, all the windows of it were open; upon this, ſlipping along by the ſide of the paliſade, he came up cloſe to it, and one may eaſily judge what were the emotions of his heart at that inſtant: he took his ſtation behind one of the windows, which ſerved him conveniently to ſee what madam de Cleves was doing. He ſaw ſhe was alone; he ſaw her ſo inimitably beautiful, that he could ſcarce govern the tranſports which that ſight gave him. The weather was hot, her head and neck were uncovered, and her hair hung careleſly about her. She lay on a couch with a table before her, on which were ſeveral baſkets full of ribbands, out of which ſhe choſe ſome; and he obſerved ſhe choſe thoſe colours which he wore at the tournament. He ſaw her make them up into knots for an Indian cane, which had been his, and which he had given to his ſiſter; madam de Cleves took it from her, without ſeeming to know it had belonged to the duke. After ſhe had finiſhed her work with the ſweeteſt grace imaginable, the ſentiments of her heart ſhewing themſelves in her countenance, ſhe took a wax candle, and came to a great table over againſt the picture of the ſiege of Metz, in which was the portrait of the duke de Nemours; ſhe ſat down and ſet herſelf to look upon that pourtrait, with an attention and thoughtfulneſs which love only can give.

It is impoſſible to expreſs what monſieur de Nemours felt at this moment; to ſee, at midnight, in the fineſt place in the world, a lady he adored; to ſee her without her knowing that he ſaw her, and to find her wholly taken up with things that related to him, and to the

paſſion

paſſion which ſhe concealed from him; this is what was never taſted nor imagined by any other lover.

The duke was ſo tranſported and beſide himſelf, that he continued motionleſs, with his eyes fixed on madam de Cleves, without thinking how precious his time was: when he was a little recovered, he thought it beſt not to ſpeak to her till ſhe came into the garden; and he imagined he might do it there with more ſafety, becauſe ſhe would be at a greater diſtance from her women; but finding ſhe ſtaid in the bower, he reſolved to go in: when he was upon the point of doing it, what was his confuſion! How fearful was he of diſpleaſing her, and of changing that countenance, where ſo much ſweetneſs dwelt, into looks of anger and reſentment!

To come to ſee madam de Cleves, without being ſeen by her, had no impudence in it; but to think of ſhewing himſelf appeared very unwiſe; a thouſand things now came into his mind which he had not thought of before; it carried in it ſomewhat extremely bold and extravagant, to ſurprize in the middle of the night a perſon to whom he had never yet ſpoke of his paſſion: he thought he had no reaſon to expect ſhe would hear him, but that ſhe would juſtly reſent the danger to which he expoſed her by accidents which might riſe from this attempt: all his courage left him, and he was ſeveral times upon the point of reſolving to go back again without ſhewing himſelf; yet urged by the deſire of ſpeaking to her, and heartened by the hopes which every thing he had ſeen gave him, he advanced ſome ſteps; but in ſuch diſorder, that a ſcarf he had on entangled in the window, and made a noiſe. Madam de Cleves turned about; and whether her fancy was full of him, or that ſhe ſtood in a place ſo directly to the light that ſhe might know him, ſhe thought it was he; and without the leaſt heſitation, or turning towards the place where he was, ſhe entered the bower where her women were. On her entering ſhe was in ſuch diſorder, that

to conceal it, ſhe was forced to ſay ſhe was ill: ſhe ſaid it too in order to employ her people about her, and to give the duke time to retire. When ſhe had made ſome reflection, ſhe thought ſhe had been deceived, and that her fancying ſhe ſaw monſieur de Nemours was only the effect of imagination. She knew he was at Chambort; ſhe ſaw no probability of his engaging in ſo hazardous an enterpriſe; ſhe had a deſire ſeveral times to re-enter the bower, and to ſee if there was any body in the garden. She wiſhed, perhaps, as much as ſhe feared, to find the duke de Nemours there; but at laſt, reaſon and prudence prevailed over her other thoughts, and ſhe found it better to continue in the doubt ſhe was in, than to run the hazard of ſatisfying herſelf about it. She was a long time ere ſhe could reſolve to leave a place to which ſhe thought the duke was ſo near; and it was almoſt day-break when ſhe returned to the caſtle.

The duke de Nemours ſtaid in the garden, as long as there was any light; he was not without hopes of ſeeing madam de Cleves again, though he was convinced that ſhe knew him, and that ſhe went away only to avoid him; but when he found the doors were ſhut, he knew he had nothing more to hope; he went to take horſe near the place where monſieur de Cleves's gentleman was watching him. This gentleman followed him to the ſame village where he had left him in the evening. The duke reſolved to ſtay there all the day, in order to return at night to Colomiers, to ſee if madam de Cleves would yet have the cruelty to ſhun him, or not expoſe herſelf to view: though he was very much pleaſed to find himſelf ſo much in her thoughts, yet was he extremely grieved, at the ſame time, to ſee her ſo naturally bent to avoid him.

Never was paſſion ſo tender and ſo violent as that of monſieur de Nemours; he walked under the willows, along a little brook which ran behind the houſe, where he lay concealed; he kept himſelf as much out of the way as poſſible, that he might not be ſeen by any body; he

he abandoned himſelf to the tranſports of his love; and his heart was ſo full of tenderneſs, that he was forced to let fall ſome tears: but thoſe tears were ſuch as grief alone could not ſhed; they had a mixture of ſweetneſs and pleaſure in them, which is to be found only in love.

He ſet himſelf to recal to mind all the actions of madam de Cleves ever ſince he had been in love with her; her cruelty and rigour, and that modeſty and decency of behaviour ſhe had always obſerved towards him, though ſhe loved him: For, after all, ſhe loves me, ſaid he; ſhe loves me; I cannot doubt of it; the deepeſt engagements and the greateſt favours are not more certain proofs than thoſe I have had. In the mean time, I am treated with the ſame rigour as if I were hated; I hoped ſomething from time, but I have no reaſon to expect it any longer; I ſee her always equally on her guard againſt me and againſt herſelf; if I were not loved, I ſhould make it my buſineſs to pleaſe; but I do pleaſe; ſhe loves me, and tries to hide it from me. What have I then to hope, and what change am I to expect in my fortune? Though I am loved by the moſt amiable perſon in the world, I am under that exceſs of paſſion which proceeds from the firſt certainty of being loved by her, only to make me more ſenſible of being ill uſed. Let me ſee that you love me, fair princeſs, cried he, make me acquainted with your ſentiments; provided I know them once in my life from you, I am content that you reſume for ever the cruelties with which you oppreſs me; look upon me, at leaſt, with the ſame eyes with which I ſaw you look that night upon my picture; could you behold that with ſuch ſweet complacency, and yet avoid me with ſo much cruelty? What are you afraid of? Why does my love appear ſo terrible to you? You love me, and you endeavour in vain to conceal it; you have even given me involuntary proofs of it; I know my happineſs; permit me to enjoy it, and ceaſe to make me unhappy. Is it poſſible I ſhould be loved by the princeſs

of Cleves, and yet be unhappy? How beautiful was ſhe laſt night! How could I forbear throwing myſelf at her feet? If I had done it, I might perhaps have hindered her from ſhunning me; my reſpectful behaviour would have removed her fears; but, perhaps, after all, ſhe did not know it was I; I afflict myſelf more than I need; ſhe was only frighted to ſee a man at ſo unſeaſonable an hour.

Theſe thoughts employ'd the duke de Nemours all the day; he wiſhed impatiently for the night; and as ſoon as it came, he returned to Colomiers. Monſieur de Cleves's gentleman, who was diſguiſed that he might be leſs obſerved, followed him to the place to which he had followed him the evening before, and ſaw him enter the garden again. The duke ſoon perceived that madam de Cleves had not run the riſque of his making another effort to ſee her, the doors being all ſhut; he looked about on all ſides to ſee if he could diſcover any light, but he ſaw none.

Madam de Cleves, ſuſpecting he might return, continued in her chamber; ſhe had reaſon to apprehend ſhe ſhould not always have the power to avoid him, and ſhe would not ſubmit herſelf to the hazard of ſpeaking to him in a manner that would have been unſuitable to the conduct ſhe had hitherto obſerved.

Monſieur de Nemours, though he had no hopes of ſeeing her, could not find in his heart ſoon to leave a place where ſhe ſo often was; he paſſed the whole night in the garden, and found ſome pleaſure, at leaſt, in ſeeing the ſame objects which ſhe ſaw every day; it was near ſun-riſe before he thought of retiring; but at laſt, the fear of being diſcovered obliged him to go away.

It was impoſſible for him to return to court without ſeeing madam de Cleves; he made a viſit to his ſiſter the ducheſs of Mercœur, at her houſe near Colomiers. She was extremely ſurprized at her brother's arrival; but he invented ſo probable a pretence for his journey, and conducted his plot ſo ſkilfully, that he drew her to make

make the firſt propoſal herſelf of viſiting madam de Cleves. This propoſal was executed that very day, and monſieur de Nemours told his ſiſter, that he would leave her at Colomiers, in order to go directly to the king; he formed this pretence of leaving her at Colomiers, in hopes ſhe would take her leave before him; and he thought he had found out by that means an infallible way of ſpeaking to madam de Cleves.

The princeſs of Cleves, when they arrived, was walking in her garden; the ſight of monſieur de Nemours gave her no ſmall uneaſineſs, and put her out of doubt that it was he ſhe had ſeen the foregoing night. The certainty of his having done ſo bold and imprudent a thing, gave her ſome little reſentment againſt him; and the duke obſerved an air of coldneſs in her face, which ſenſibly grieved him. The converſation turned upon indifferent matters; and yet he had the ſkill all the while to ſhew ſo much wit, complaiſance, and admiration for madam de Cleves, that part of the coldneſs ſhe expreſſed towards him at firſt, left her in ſpite of herſelf.

When his fears were over, and he began to take heart, he ſhewed an extreme curioſity to ſee the pavilion in the foreſt; he ſpoke of it as of the moſt agreeable place in the world, and gave ſo exact a deſcription of it, that madam de Mercœur ſaid, he muſt needs have been there ſeveral times to know all the particular beauties of it ſo well. And yet I do not believe, replied madam de Cleves, that the duke de Nemours was ever there; it has been finiſhed but a little while.---It is not long ſince I was there, replied the duke, looking upon her, and I do not know if I ought not to be glad you have forgot you ſaw me there. Madam de Mercœur, being taken up in obſerving the beauties of the gardens, did not attend to what her brother ſaid; madam de Cleves bluſhed, and with her eyes caſt down, without looking on monſieur de Nemours, I do not remember, ſaid ſhe, to have ſeen you there; and if you have been there,

it was without my knowledge.---It is true, madam, replied he, I was there without your orders, and I paſſed there the moſt ſweet and cruel moments of my life.

Madam de Cleves underſtood very well what he ſaid, but made him no anſwer; her care was to prevent madam de Mercœur from going into the bower, becauſe the duke de Nemours's picture was there, and ſhe had no mind ſhe ſhould ſee it; ſhe managed the matter ſo well, that the time paſſed away inſenſibly, and madam de Mercœur began to talk of going home: but when madam de Cleves found that the duke and his ſiſter did not go together, ſhe plainly ſaw to what ſhe was going to be expoſed; ſhe found herſelf under the ſame embarraſſment ſhe was in at Paris, and took alſo the ſame reſolution; her fear, leſt this viſit ſhould be a further confirmation of her huſband's ſuſpicions, did not a little contribute to determine her; and to the end monſieur de Nemours might not remain alone with her, ſhe told madam de Mercœur ſhe would wait upon her to the borders of the foreſt, and ordered her chariot to be got ready. The duke was ſtruck with ſuch a violent grief, to find that madam de Cleves ſtill continued to exerciſe the ſame rigour towards him, that he turned pale that moment. Madam de Mercœur aſked him if he was ill; but he looked upon madam de Cleves without being perceived by any body elſe, and made her ſenſible by his looks, that he had no other illneſs beſides deſpair. However, there was no remedy, but he muſt let them go together, without daring to follow them; after what he had told his ſiſter, that he was to go directly to court, he could not return with her, but went to Paris, and ſet out from thence the next day.

Monſieur de Cleves's gentleman had obſerved him all the while; he returned alſo to Paris; and when he found monſieur de Nemours was ſet out for Chambort, he took poſt to get thither before him, and to give an account of his journey. His maſter expected his return

with

with impatience, as if the happineſs or unhappineſs of his life depended upon it.

As ſoon as he ſaw him, he judged from his countenance and ſilence, that the news he brought was very diſagreeable; he was ſtruck with ſorrow, and continued ſome time without being able to ſpeak; at laſt he made ſigns with his hand to him to withdraw: Go, ſays he, I ſee what you have to ſay to me, but I have not the power to hear it.---I can acquaint you with nothing, ſaid the gentleman, upon which one can form any certain judgment; it is true, the duke de Nemours went two nights ſucceſſively into the garden in the foreſt; and the day after, he was at Colomiers with the ducheſs of Mercœur.---It is enough, replied monſieur de Cleves, ſtill making ſigns to him to withdraw; it is enough, I want no further information. The gentleman was forced to leave his maſter, abandoned to deſpair; nor ever was deſpair more violent. Few men of ſo high a ſpirit, and ſo paſſionately in love as the prince of Cleves, have experienced at the ſame time the grief ariſing from the falſhood of a miſtreſs, and the ſhame of being deceived by a wife.

Monſieur de Cleves could ſet no bounds to his affliction; he fell ill of a fever that very night, and his diſtemper was accompanied with ſuch ſymptoms, that it was thought very dangerous. Madam de Cleves was informed of it, and came in all haſte to him: when ſhe arrived, he was ſtill worſe; beſides, ſhe obſerved ſomething in him ſo cold and chilling with reſpect to her, that ſhe was equally ſurprized and grieved at it; he even ſeemed to receive with pain the ſervices ſhe did him in his ſickneſs; but at laſt, ſhe imagined it was, perhaps, only the effect of his diſtemper.

When ſhe was come to Blois, where the court then was, the duke de Nemours was overjoy'd to think ſhe was at the ſame place where he was; he endeavoured to ſee her, and went every day to the prince of Cleves's under pretence of enquiring how he did; but it was to no

no purpoſe; ſhe did not ſtir out of her huſband's room, and was grieved at heart for the condition he was in. It vexed monſieur de Nemours to ſee her under ſuch affliction, an affliction which he plainly ſaw revived the friendſhip ſhe had for monſieur de Cleves, and diverted the paſſion that lay kindling in her heart. The thought of this ſhocked him ſeverely for ſome time; but the extremity to which monſieur de Cleves's ſickneſs was grown, opened to him a ſcene of new hopes; he ſaw it was probable that madam de Cleves would be at liberty to follow her own inclinations, and that he might expect for the future a ſeries of happineſs and laſting pleaſures; he could not ſupport the ecſtaſy of that thought, a thought ſo full of tranſport! he baniſhed it out of his mind for fear of becoming doubly wretched, if he happened to be diſappointed in his hopes.

In the mean time monſieur de Cleves was given over by his phyſicians. One of the laſt days of his illneſs, after having had a very bad night, he ſaid in the morning, he had a deſire to ſleep; but madam de Cleves, who remained alone in his chamber, found that inſtead of taking repoſe he was extremely reſtleſs; ſhe came to him, and fell on her knees by his bed-ſide, her face all covered with tears; and though monſieur de Cleves had taken a reſolution not to ſhew her the violent diſpleaſure he had conceived againſt her, yet the care ſhe took of him, and the ſorrow ſhe expreſſed, which ſometimes he thought ſincere, and at other times the effect of her diſſimulation and perfidiouſneſs, diſtracted him ſo violently with oppoſite ſentiments full of woe, that he could not forbear giving them vent.

You ſhed plenty of tears, madam, ſaid he, for a death which you are the cauſe of, and which cannot give you the trouble you pretend to be in; I am no longer in a condition to reproach you, added he with a voice weakened by ſickneſs and grief; I die through the dreadful grief and diſcontent you have given me;

ought

ought ſo extraordinary an action, as that of your ſpeaking to me at Colomiers, to have had ſo little conſequences? Why did you inform me of your paſſion for the duke de Nemours, if your virtue was no longer able to oppoſe it? I loved you to that extremity, I would have been glad to have been deceived, I confeſs it to my ſhame; I have regretted that pleaſing, falſe ſecurity out of which you drew me: Why did not you leave me in that blind tranquillity which ſo many huſbands enjoy? I ſhould, perhaps, have been ignorant all my life that you was in love with monſieur de Nemours. I ſhall die, added he; but know, that you make death pleaſing to me, and that, after you have taken from me the eſteem and affection I had for you, life would be odious to me. What ſhould I live for? To ſpend my days with a perſon whom I have loved ſo much, and by whom I have been ſo cruelly deceived; or to live apart from her, and break out openly into violences ſo oppoſite to my temper, and the love I had for you? That love, madam, was far greater than it appeared to you; I concealed the greateſt part of it from you, for fear of being importunate, or of loſing ſomewhat in your eſteem by a behaviour not becoming a huſband: in a word, I deſerved your affection; and I die without regret, ſince I have not been able to obtain it, and ſince I can no longer deſire it. Adieu, madam! you will one day regret a man who loved you with a ſincere and virtuous paſſion; you will feel the anxiety which reaſonable perſons meet with in intrigue and galantry; and you will know the difference between ſuch a love as I had for you, and the love of people who only profeſs admiration for you to gratify their vanity in ſeducing you; but my death will leave you at liberty, and you may make the duke de Nemours happy without guilt: What ſignifies any thing that can happen when I am no more; and why ſhould I have the weakneſs to trouble myſelf about it?

Madam

Madam de Cleves was ſo far from imagining that her huſband ſuſpected her virtue, that ſhe heard all this diſcourſe without comprehending the meaning of it, and without having any other notion about it, except that he reproached her for her inclination for the duke de Nemours; at laſt, ſtarting all of a ſudden out of her blindneſs, I guilty! cried ſhe, I am a ſtranger to the very thought of guilt; the ſevereſt virtue could not have inſpired any other conduct than that which I have followed, and I never acted any thing but what I could have wiſhed you to have been witneſs to.---Could you have wiſhed, replied monſieur de Cleves, looking on her with diſdain, I had been a witneſs of thoſe nights you paſſed with monſieur de Nemours? Ah! madam, is it you I ſpeak of, when I ſpeak of a lady that has paſſed nights with a man not her huſband?---No, ſir, replied ſhe, it is not me you ſpeak of; I never ſpent a night nor a moment with the duke de Nemours; he never ſaw me in private, I never ſuffered him to do it, nor would give him a hearing.---Speak no more of it, ſaid he, interrupting her; falſe oaths or a confeſſion would perhaps give me equal pain. Madam de Cleves could not anſwer him; her tears and her grief took away her ſpeech; at laſt, ſtruggling for utterance, Look on me at leaſt, hear me, ſaid ſhe; if my intereſt only were concerned I would ſuffer theſe reproaches, but your life is at ſtake; hear me for your own ſake; I am ſo innocent, Truth pleads ſo ſtrongly for me, it is impoſſible but I muſt convince you.---Would to God you could! cried he; but what can you ſay? The duke de Nemours, has not he been at Colomiers with his ſiſter? And did not he paſs the two foregoing nights with you in the garden in the foreſt?---If that be my crime, replied ſhe, it is eaſy to juſtify myſelf; I do not deſire you to believe me, believe your ſervants and domeſticks; aſk them if I went into the garden the evening before monſieur de Nemours came to Colomiers, and if I did not go out of it the night before two hours ſooner

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than I uſed to do?---After this, ſhe told him, how ſhe imagined ſhe had ſeen ſomebody in the garden, and acknowledged that ſhe believed it to be the duke de Nemours; ſhe ſpoke to him with ſo much confidence, and truth ſo naturally perſuades, even where it is not probable, that monſieur de Cleves was almoſt convinced of her innocence. I do not know, ſaid he, whether I ought to believe you; I am ſo near death, that I would not know any thing that might make me die with reluctance; you have cleared your innocence too late; however it will be a comfort to me to depart with the thought that you are worthy of the eſteem I have had for you; I beg you I may be aſſured of this further comfort, that my memory will be dear to you, and that if it had been in your power, you would have had for me the ſame paſſion which you had for another. He would have gone on, but was ſo weak that his ſpeech failed him. Madam de Cleves ſent for the phyſicians, who found him almoſt lifeleſs; yet he languiſhed ſome days, and died at laſt with admirable conſtancy.

Madam de Cleves was afflicted to ſo violent a degree, that ſhe loſt in a manner the uſe of her reaſon. The queen was ſo kind as to come to ſee her, and carried her to a convent without her being ſenſible whither ſhe was conducted; her ſiſters-in-law brought her back to Paris, before ſhe was in a condition to feel diſtinctly even her griefs: when ſhe was reſtored to her faculty of thinking, and reflected what a huſband ſhe had loſt, and conſidered that ſhe had cauſed his death by the paſſion which ſhe had for another, the horror ſhe had for herſelf and the duke de Nemours was not to be expreſſed.

The duke, in the beginning of her mourning, durſt pay her no other reſpects but ſuch as decency required; he knew madam de Cleves enough to be ſenſible that great importunities and eagerneſs would be diſagreeable to her; but what he learned afterwards plainly convinced

vinced him that he ought to obſerve the ſame conduct a great while longer.

A ſervant of the duke's informed him, that monſieur de Cleves's gentleman, who was his intimate friend, had told him, in the exceſs of his grief for the loſs of his maſter, that monſieur de Nemours's journey to Colomiers was the occaſion of his death. The duke was extremely ſurpriſed to hear this; but after having reflected upon it, he gueſſed the truth in part, and rightly judged what madam de Cleves's ſentiments would be at firſt, and what a diſtance it would throw him from her, if ſhe thought her huſband's illneſs was occaſioned by his jealouſy; he was of opinion that he ought not ſo much as to put her in mind of his name very ſoon; and he abided by that conduct, however ſevere it appeared to him.

He took a journey to Paris, nor could he forbear calling at her houſe to enquire how ſhe did. He was told, that ſhe ſaw nobody, and that ſhe had even given ſtrict orders that they ſhould not trouble her with an account of any that might come to ſee her. Thoſe very ſtrict orders, perhaps, were given with a view to the duke, and to prevent her hearing him ſpoken of; but he was too much in love to be able to live ſo abſolutely deprived of the ſight of madam de Cleves; he reſolved to find the means, let the difficulty be what it would, to get out of a condition which was ſo inſupportable to him.

The grief of that princeſs exceeded the bounds of reaſon; a huſband dying, and dying on her account, and with ſo much tenderneſs for her, never went out of her mind: ſhe continually revolved in her thoughts what ſhe owed him, and ſhe condemned herſelf for not having had a paſſion for him, as if that had been a thing which depended on herſelf; ſhe found no conſolation but in the thought, that ſhe lamented him as he deſerved to be lamented, and that ſhe would do nothing during

during the remainder of her life, but what he would have been glad she should have done, had he lived.

She had often been thinking how he came to know, that the duke de Nemours had been at Colomiers; she could not suspect that the duke himself had told it; though it was indifferent to her whether he had or no, she thought herself so perfectly cured of the passion she had had for him; and yet she was grieved at the heart to think that he was the cause of her husband's death; and she remembered with pain the fear monsieur de Cleves expressed, when dying, lest she should marry the duke: but all these griefs were swallowed up in that for the loss of her husband, and she thought she had no other but that one.

After several months the violence of her grief abated, and she fell into a languishing kind of melancholy. Madam de Martigues made a journey to Paris, and constantly visited her during the time she staid there: she entertained her with an account of the court, and what passed there; and though madam de Cleves appeared unconcerned, yet still she continued talking on that subject in hopes to divert her.

She talked to her of the viscount, of monsieur de Guise, and of all others that were distinguished either in person or merit. As for the duke de Nemours, says she, I do not know if state-affairs have not taken possession of his heart in the room of galantry; he is abundantly less gay than he used to be, and seems wholly to decline the company of women; he often takes journies to Paris, and I believe he is there now. The duke de Nemours's name surprised madam de Cleves, and made her blush; she changed the discourse, nor did madam de Martigues take notice of her concern.

The next day madam de Cleves, who employed herself in things suitable to the condition she was in, went to a man's house in her neighbourhood, that was famous for working silk after a particular manner, and she designed

deſigned to beſpeak ſome pieces for herſelf. Having ſeen ſeveral kinds of his work, ſhe ſpied a chamber-door, where ſhe thought there were more, and deſired it might be opened: the maſter anſwered, he had not the key, and that the room was taken by a man, who came there ſometimes in the day-time to draw the plans and proſpects of the fine houſes and gardens that were to be ſeen from his windows; he is one of the handſomeſt men I ever ſaw, added he, and does not look much like one that works for his living; whenever he comes here, I obſerve he always looks towards the gardens and houſes, but I never ſee him work.

Madam de Cleves liſtened to this ſtory very attentively; and what madam de Martigues had told her of monſieur de Nemours's coming now and then to Paris, ſhe applied in her fancy to that handſome man, who came to a place ſo near her houſe; and this gave her an idea of monſieur de Nemours endeavouring to ſee her; which raiſed a diſorder in her, of which ſhe did not know the cauſe: ſhe went towards the windows to ſee where they looked into, and ſhe found they overlooked all her gardens, and directly faced her apartment: and when ſhe was in her own room, ſhe could eaſily ſee that very window where ſhe was told the man came to take his proſpects. The thought that it was the duke de Nemours, entirely changed the ſituation of her mind; ſhe no longer found herſelf in that penſive tranquillity which ſhe had begun to enjoy, her ſpirits were ruffled again as with a tempeſt: at laſt, not being able to ſtay at home, ſhe went abroad to take the air in a garden without the ſuburbs, where ſhe hoped to be alone; ſhe walked about a great while, and found no likelihood of any one's being there.

Having croſſed a little wilderneſs, ſhe perceived at the end of the walk, in the moſt remote part of the garden, a kind of a bower open on all ſides, and went towards it; when ſhe was near, ſhe ſaw a man lying on the benches, who ſeemed ſunk into a deep contemplation,

contemplation, and ſhe diſcovered it was the duke de Nemours: upon this ſhe ſtopped ſhort; but her attendants made ſome noiſe, which rouſed the duke out of his muſing: he took no notice who the perſons were that diſturbed him, but got up in order to avoid the company that was coming towards him; and making a low bow, which hindered him from ſeeing thoſe he ſaluted, he turned into another walk.

If he had known whom he avoided, with what eagerneſs would he have returned! But he walked down the alley, and madam de Cleves ſaw him go out at a back-door, where his coach waited for him. What an effect did this tranſient view produce in the heart of madam de Cleves! What a flame rekindled out of the embers of her love, and with what violence did it burn! She went and ſat down in the ſame place from which monſieur de Nemours was newly riſen, and ſeemed perfectly overwhelmed; his image immediately poſſeſſed her fancy, and ſhe conſidered him as the moſt amiable perſon in the world, as one who had long loved her with a paſſion full of veneration and ſincerity, ſlighting all for her, paying reſpect even to her grief, to his own torture, labouring to ſee her without a thought of being ſeen by her, quitting the court (though the court's delight) to come and look on the walls where ſhe was ſhut up, and to paſs his melancholy hours in places where he could not hope to meet her; in a word, a man whoſe attachment to her alone merited returns of love; and for whom ſhe had ſo ſtrong an inclination, that ſhe ſhould have loved him, though ſhe had not been beloved by him; and beſides, one whoſe quality was ſuitable to her's: all the obſtacles that could riſe from duty and virtue were now removed, and all the trace that remained on her mind of their former condition, was the paſſion the duke de Nemours had for her, and that which ſhe had for him.

All theſe ideas were new to her; her affliction for the death of her huſband had left her no room for thoughts

thoughts of this kind; but the ſight of monſieur de Nemours revived them, and they crowded again into her mind; but when ſhe had taken her fill of them, and remembered that this very man, whom ſhe conſidered as a proper match for her, was the ſame ſhe had loved in her huſband's life-time, and was the cauſe of his death, and that on his death-bed he had expreſſed a fear of her marrying him; her ſevere virtue was ſo ſhocked at the imagination, that ſhe thought it would be as criminal in her to marry monſieur de Nemours now, as it was to love him before: in ſhort, ſhe abandoned herſelf to theſe reflections ſo pernicious to her happineſs, and fortified herſelf in them by the inconveniency which ſhe foreſaw would attend ſuch a marriage. After two hours ſtay in this place ſhe returned home, convinced that it was indiſpenſably her duty to avoid the ſight of the man ſhe loved.

But this conviction, which was the effect of reaſon and virtue, did not carry her heart along with it; her heart was ſo violently fixed on the duke de Nemours, that ſhe became even an object of compaſſion, and was wholly deprived of reſt. Never did ſhe paſs a night in ſo uneaſy a manner; in the morning, the firſt thing ſhe did was to ſee if there was any body at the window which looked towards her apartment; ſhe ſaw there monſieur de Nemours, and was ſo ſurpriſed upon it, and withdrew ſo haſtily, as made him judge ſhe knew him; he had often wiſhed to be ſeen by her; ever ſince he had found out that method of ſeeing her, and when he had no hopes of obtaining that ſatisfaction, his way was to go to muſe in the garden where ſhe found him.

Tired at laſt with ſo unfortunate and uncertain a condition, he reſolved to attempt ſomething to determine his fate: What ſhould I wait for? ſaid he. I have long known ſhe loves me; ſhe is free; ſhe has no duty now to plead againſt me; why ſhould I ſubmit myſelf to the hardſhip of ſeeing her, without being ſeen by her or ſpeaking to her? Is it poſſible for love ſo abſolutely to have

have deprived me of reaſon and courage, and to have rendered me ſo different from what I have been in all my other amours? It was fit I ſhould pay a regard to madam de Cleves's grief; but I do it too long, and I give her leiſure to extinguiſh the inclination ſhe had for me.

After theſe reflections, he conſidered what meaſures he ought to take to ſee her; he found he had no longer any reaſon to conceal his paſſion from the viſcount de Chartres; he reſolved to ſpeak to him of it, and to communicate to him his deſign with regard to his niece.

The viſcount was then at Paris, the town being extremely full, and every body buſy in preparing equipages and dreſſes to attend the king of Navarre, who was to conduct the queen of Spain: monſieur de Nemours went to the viſcount, and made an ingenuous confeſſion to him of all he had concealed hitherto, except madam de Cleves's ſentiments, which he would not ſeem to know.

The viſcount received what he told him with a great deal of pleaſure, and aſſured him, that though he was not acquainted with his ſentiments on that ſubject, he had often thought, ſince madam de Cleves had been a widow, that ſhe was the only lady that deſerved him. Monſieur de Nemours intreated him to give him an opportunity of ſpeaking to her, and learning what diſpoſition ſhe was in.

The viſcount propoſed to carry him to her houſe; but the duke was of opinion ſhe would be ſhocked at it, becauſe as yet ſhe ſaw nobody; ſo that they agreed, it would be better for the viſcount to aſk her to come to him, under ſome pretence, and for the duke to come to them by a private ſtair-caſe, that he might not be obſerved. Accordingly this was executed; madam de Cleves came, the viſcount went to receive her, and led her into a great cloſet at the end of his apartment: ſome time after monſieur de Nemours came in, as by chance. Madam de Cleves was in great ſurprize to ſee him; ſhe

bluſhed, and endeavoured to hide it. The viſcount at firſt ſpoke of indifferent matters, and then went out, as if he had ſome orders to give, telling madam de Cleves he muſt deſire her to entertain the duke in his ſtead, and that he would return immediately.

It is impoſſible to expreſs the ſentiments of monſieur de Nemours and madam de Cleves, when they ſaw themſelves alone, and at liberty to ſpeak to one another, as they had never been before: they continued ſilent a while; at length, ſaid monſieur de Nemours, Can you, madam, pardon the viſcount for giving me an opportunity of ſeeing you, and ſpeaking to you, an opportunity which you have always ſo cruelly denied me? I ought not to pardon him, replied ſhe, for having forgot the condition I am in, and to what he expoſes my reputation. Having ſpoke theſe words, ſhe would have gone away; but monſieur de Nemours ſtopping her, Fear not, madam, ſaid he; you have nothing to apprehend; nobody knows I am here; hear me, madam, hear me, if not out of goodneſs, yet, at leaſt, for your own ſake, and to free yourſelf from the extravagancies which a paſſion I am no longer maſter of will infallibly hurry me into. Madam de Cleves now firſt yielded to the inclination ſhe had for the duke de Nemours, and beholding him with eyes full of ſoftneſs and charms, But what can you hope for, ſays ſhe, from the complaiſance you deſire of me? You will, perhaps, repent that you have obtained it, and I ſhall certainly repent that I have granted it. You deſerve a happier fortune than you have hitherto had, or than you can have for the future, unleſs you ſeek it elſewhere.---I, madam, ſaid he, ſeek happineſs any where elſe! Or, is there any happineſs for me, but in your love? Though I never ſpoke of it before, I cannot believe, madam, that you are not acquainted with my paſſion, or that you do not know it to be the greateſt and moſt ſincere that ever was: What trials has it ſuffered in things you are a ſtranger to! What trials have you put it to by your rigour!

Since

Since you are desirous I should open myself to you, answered madam de Cleves, I will comply with your desire, and I will do it with a sincerity that is rarely to be met with in persons of my sex: I shall not tell you that I have not observed your passion for me; perhaps you would not believe me if I should tell you so; I confess, therefore, to you, not only that I have observed it, but that I have observed it in such lights as you yourself could wish it might appear to me in.---And if you have seen my passion, madam, said he, is it possible for you not to have been moved by it? And may I venture to ask, if it has made no impression on your heart?---You should have judged of that from my conduct, replied she; but I should be glad to know what you thought of it.---I ought to be in a happier condition, replied he, to venture to inform you; my fortune would contradict what I should say; all I can tell you, madam, is, that I heartily wished you had not acknowledged to monsieur de Cleves what you concealed from me, and that you had concealed from him what you made appear to me.---How came you to discover, replied she, blushing, that I acknowledged any thing to monsieur de Cleves?---I learned it from yourself, madam, replied he; but that you may the better pardon the boldness I shewed in listening to what you said, remember if I have made an ill use of what I heard, if my hopes rose upon it, or if I was the more encouraged to speak to you.

Here he began to relate how he had overheard her conversation with monsieur de Cleves; but she interrupted him before he had finished.---Say no more of it, said she, I see how you came to be so well informed; I suspected you knew the business but too well at the queen-dauphin's, who learned this adventure from those you had intrusted with it.

Upon this monsieur de Nemours informed her in what manner the thing came to pass. No excuses, says she; I have long forgiven you, without being informed how it was brought about; but since you have learned from

my own ſelf what I deſigned to conceal from you all my life, I will acknowledge to you, that you have inſpired me with ſentiments I was unacquainted with before I ſaw you, and of which I had ſo ſlender an idea, that they gave me at firſt a ſurprize which ſtill added to the pain that conſtantly attends them: I am the leſs aſhamed to make you this confeſſion, becauſe I do it at a time when I may do it without a crime, and becauſe you have ſeen that my conduct has not been governed by my affections.

Can you believe, madam, ſaid monſieur de Nemours, falling on his knees, but I ſhall expire at your feet with joy and tranſport?---I have told you nothing, ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, but what you knew too well before.---Ah! madam, ſaid he, what a difference is there between learning it by chance, and knowing it from yourſelf, and ſeeing that you are pleaſed I know it!---It is true, anſwered ſhe, I would have you know it, and I find a pleaſure in telling it you; I do not even know if I do not tell it you more for my own ſake, than for yours; for, after all, this confeſſion will have no conſequences, and I ſhall follow the auſtere rules which my duty impoſes upon me.---How, madam! you are not of that opinion, replied monſieur de Nemours; you are no longer under any obligation of duty; you are at liberty; and if I durſt, I ſhould even tell you, that it is in your power to act ſo, that your duty ſhall one day oblige you to preſerve the ſentiments you have for me.---My duty, replied ſhe, forbids me to think of any man, but of you the laſt in the world, and for reaſons which are unknown to you.---Thoſe reaſons, perhaps, are not unknown to me, anſwered he; but they are far from being good ones. I believe that monſieur de Cleves thought me happier than I was, and imagined that you approved of thoſe extravagancies which my paſſion led me into without your approbation. ---Let us talk no more of that adventure, ſaid ſhe; I cannot bear the thought of it, and the conſequences of

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it have been ſuch, that it is too melancholy a ſubject to be ſpoken of; it is but too true, that you were the cauſe of monſieur de Cleves's death; the ſuſpicions which your inconſiderate conduct gave him coſt him his life, as much as if you had taken it away with your own hands: judge what I ought to have done, had you two fought a duel, and he been killed; I know very well, it is not the ſame thing in the eye of the world; but with me there is no difference, ſince I know that his death was owing to you, and that it was on my account.---Ah! madam, ſaid monſieur de Nemours, what phantom of duty do you oppoſe to my happineſs? What, madam! ſhall a vain and groundleſs fancy hinder you from making a man happy, for whom you have an inclination? What! have I had ſome ground to hope I might paſs my life with you? Has my fate led me to love the moſt deſerving lady in the world? Have I obſerved in her all that can make a miſtreſs adorable? Has ſhe had no diſlike to me? Have I found in her conduct every thing which I could wiſh for in a wife? For, in ſhort, madam, you are perhaps the only perſon in whom thoſe two characters have ever concurred to the degree they are in you; thoſe who marry miſtreſſes by whom they are loved, tremble when they marry them, and cannot but fear leſt they ſhould obſerve the ſame conduct towards others, which they obſerved towards them; but in you, madam, I can fear nothing; I ſee nothing in you but matter of admiration: have I had a proſpect of ſo much felicity, for no other end but to ſee it obſtructed by you? Ah! madam, you forget, that you have diſtinguiſhed me above other men; or rather, you have not diſtinguiſhed me; you have deceived yourſelf, and I have flattered myſelf.

You have not flattered yourſelf, replied ſhe; the reaſons of my duty would not perhaps appear ſo ſtrong to me, without that diſtinction of which you doubt; and it is that which makes me apprehend unfortunate conſequences from your alliance.---I have nothing to anſwer,

madam, replied he, when you tell me you apprehend unfortunate conſequences; but I own, that after all you have been pleaſed to ſay to me, I did not expect from you ſo cruel a reaſon.---The reaſon you ſpeak of, replied madam de Cleves, is ſo little diſobliging as to you, that I do not know how to tell it you.---Alas! madam, ſaid he, how can you fear I ſhould flatter myſelf too much, after what you have been ſaying to me?---I ſhall continue to ſpeak to you, ſays ſhe, with the ſame ſincerity with which I begun, and I will lay aſide that delicacy and reſerve that modeſty obliges one to in a firſt converſation; but I conjure you to hear me without interruption.

I think I owe the affection you have for me, the poor recompence not to hide from you any of my thoughts, and to let you ſee them ſuch as they really are; this, in all probability, will be the only time I ſhall allow myſelf the freedom to diſcover them to you; and I cannot confeſs without a bluſh, that the certainty of not being loved by you, as I am, appears to me ſo dreadful a misfortune, that if I had not invincible reaſons grounded on my duty, I could not reſolve to ſubject myſelf to it; I know that you are free, that I am ſo too, and that circumſtances are ſuch, that the public, perhaps, would have no reaſon to blame either you or me, ſhould we unite ourſelves for ever; but do men continue to love, when under engagements for life? Ought I to expect a miracle in my favour? And ſhall I place myſelf in a condition of ſeeing that paſſion come to an end, in which I ſhould place all my felicity? Monſieur de Cleves was, perhaps, the only man in the world capable of continuing to love after marriage; it was my ill fate that I was not able to enjoy that happineſs; and, perhaps, his paſſion had not laſted, but that he found none in me; but I ſhould not have the ſame way of preſerving yours; I even think your conſtancy is owing to the obſtacles you have met with; you have met with enough to animate you to conquer them; and my unguarded actions, or what you learned by chance, gave you hopes enough

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not to be diſcouraged.---Ah! Madam, replied monſieur de Nemours, I cannot keep the ſilence you enjoined me; you do me too much injuſtice, and make it appear too clearly that you are far from being prepoſſeſſed in my favour.---I confeſs, anſwered ſhe, that my paſſions may lead me, but they cannot blind me; nothing can hinder me from knowing that you are born with a diſpoſition for galantry, and have all the qualities proper to give ſucceſs; you have already had a great many amours, and you will have more; I ſhould no longer be ſhe you placed your happineſs in; I ſhould ſee you as warm for another as you had been for me; this would afflict me, and I am not ſure I ſhould not have the torment of jealouſy: I have ſaid too much to conceal from you, that you have already made me know what jealouſy is; and that I ſuffered ſuch cruel inquietudes the evening the queen gave me madam de Themines's letter, which, it was ſaid, was addreſſed to you, that to this moment I retain an idea of it, which makes me believe it is the worſt of all ills.

There is ſcarce a woman but out of vanity or inclination deſires to engage you; there are very few whom you do not pleaſe, and my own experience would make me believe, that there are none whom it is not in your power to pleaſe: I ſhould think you always in love and beloved, nor ſhould I be often miſtaken; and yet in this caſe, I ſhould have no remedy but patience; nay, I queſtion if I ſhould dare to complain. A lover may be reproached; but can a huſband be ſo, when one has nothing to urge, but that he loves one no longer? But admit I could accuſtom myſelf to bear a misfortune of this nature, yet how could I bear that of imagining I conſtantly ſaw monſieur de Cleves accuſing you of his death, reproaching me with having loved you, with having married you, and ſhewing me the difference betwixt his affection and yours? It is impoſſible to overrule ſuch ſtrong reaſons as theſe; I muſt continue in the condition I am in, and in the reſolution I have taken

never to alter it.---Do you believe you have the power to do it, madam? cried the duke de Nemours: Do you think your reſolution can hold out againſt a man who adores, and who has the happineſs to pleaſe you? It is more difficult than you imagine, madam, to reſiſt a perſon who pleaſes and loves one at the ſame time; you have done it by auſterity of virtue, which is almoſt without example; but that virtue no longer oppoſes your inclinations, and I hope you will follow them in ſpite of yourſelf.---I know nothing can be more difficult than what I undertake, replied madam de Cleves; I diſtruſt my ſtrength in the midſt of my reaſons; what I think I owe to the memory of monſieur de Cleves, would be a weak conſideration, if not ſupported by the intereſt of my eaſe and repoſe; and the reaſons of my repoſe have need to be ſupported by thoſe of my duty; but though I diſtruſt myſelf, I believe I ſhall never overcome my ſcruples, nor do I ſo much as hope to overcome the inclination I have for you; that inclination will make me unhappy, and I will deny myſelf the ſight of you, whatever violence it is to me. I conjure you, by all the power I have over you, to ſeek no occaſion of ſeeing me; I am in a condition which makes that criminal which might be lawful at another time; decency forbids all commerce between us. Monſieur de Nemours threw himſelf at her feet, and gave a looſe to all the violent emotions with which he was agitated; he expreſſed both by his words and tears the livelieſt and moſt tender paſſion that ever heart was touched with: nor was the heart of madam de Cleves inſenſible; ſhe looked upon him with eyes ſwelled with tears. Why was it, cries ſhe, that I can charge you with monſieur de Cleves's death? Why did not my firſt acquaintance with you begin ſince I have been at liberty? or why did not I know you before I was engaged? Why does Fate ſeparate us by ſuch invincible obſtacles?---There are no obſtacles, madam, replied monſieur de Nemours; it is you alone oppoſe my happineſs; you impoſe on yourſelf

ſelf a law which virtue and reaſon do not require you to obey.---It is true, ſays ſhe, I ſacrifice a great deal to a duty which does not ſubſiſt but in my imagination; have patience, and expect what time may produce; monſieur de Cleves is but juſt expired, and that mournful object is too near to leave me clear and diſtinct views; in the mean time, enjoy the ſatisfaction to know you have gained the heart of a perſon, who would never have loved any one, had ſhe not ſeen you. Believe the inclination I have for you will laſt for ever, and that it will be uniform and the ſame, whatever becomes of me. Adieu! ſaid ſhe; this is a converſation I ought to bluſh for; however, give an account of it to the viſcount; I agree to it, and deſire you to do it.

With theſe words ſhe went away, nor could monſieur de Nemours detain her. In the next room ſhe met with the viſcount, who ſeeing her under ſo much concern would not ſpeak to her, but led her to her coach without ſaying a word. He returned to monſieur de Nemours, who was ſo full of joy, grief, admiration, and of all thoſe affections that attend a paſſion full of hope and fear, that he had not the uſe of his reaſon. It was a long time ere the viſcount could get from him an account of the converſation; at laſt the duke related it to him; and monſieur de Chartres, without being in love, no leſs admired the virtue, wit, and merit of madam de Cleves, than did monſieur de Nemours himſelf. They began to examine what iſſue could reaſonably be hoped for in this affair; and, however fearful the duke de Nemours was from his love, he agreed with the viſcount, that it was impoſſible madam de Cleves ſhould continue in the reſolution ſhe was in; they were of opinion, nevertheleſs, that it was neceſſary to follow her orders, for fear, upon the public's perceiving the inclination he had for her, ſhe ſhould make declarations, and enter into engagements, with reſpect to the world, that ſhe would afterwards abide by, leſt it ſhould be thought ſhe loved him in her huſband's life-time.

Monſieur de Nemours determined to follow the king; it was a journey he could not well excuſe himſelf from, and ſo he reſolved to go, without endeavouring to ſee madam de Cleves again from the window out of which he had ſometimes ſeen her; he begged the viſcount to ſpeak to her: and what did he not deſire him to ſay in his behalf? What an infinite number of reaſons did he furniſh him with, to perſuade her to conquer her Scruples! In ſhort, great part of the night was ſpent before he thought of going away.

As for madam de Cleves, ſhe was in no condition to reſt: it was a thing ſo new to her to have broke looſe from the reſtraints ſhe had laid on herſelf; to have endured the firſt declarations of love that ever were made to her; and to have confeſſed that ſhe herſelf was in love with him that made them; all this was ſo new to her, that ſhe ſeemed quite another perſon. She was ſurprized at what ſhe had done; ſhe repented of it; ſhe was glad of it; all her thoughts were full of anxiety and paſſion: ſhe examined again the reaſons of her duty which obſtructed her happineſs; ſhe was grieved to find them ſo ſtrong, and was ſorry that ſhe had made them out ſo clear to monſieur de Nemours. Though ſhe had entertained thoughts of marrying him, as ſoon as ſhe beheld him in the garden of the ſuburbs, yet her late converſation with him made a much greater impreſſion on her mind; at ſome moments ſhe could not comprehend how ſhe could be unhappy by marrying him, and ſhe was ready to ſay in her heart, that her ſcruples as to what was paſt, and her fears for the future, were equally groundleſs: at other times, reaſon and her duty prevailed in her thoughts, and violently hurried her into a reſolution not to marry again, and never to ſee monſieur de Nemours; but this was a reſolution hard to be eſtabliſhed in a heart ſo ſoftened as hers, and ſo lately abandoned to the charms of love. At laſt, to give herſelf a little eaſe, ſhe concluded that it was not yet neceſſary to do herſelf the violence of coming to any reſolution; and

and decency allowed her a conſiderable time to determine what to do: however, ſhe reſolved to continue firm in having no commerce with monſieur de Nemours. The viſcount came to ſee her, and pleaded his friend's cauſe with all the wit and application imaginable; but could not make her alter her conduct, or recal the ſevere orders ſhe had given to monſieur de Nemours: ſhe told him, her deſign was not to change her condition; that ſhe knew how difficult it was to ſtand to that deſign, but that ſhe hoped ſhe ſhould be able to do it. She made him ſo ſenſible how far ſhe was affected with the opinion that monſieur de Nemours was the cauſe of her huſband's death, and how much ſhe was convinced that it would be contrary to her duty to marry him, that the viſcount was afraid it would be very difficult to take away thoſe impreſſions; he did not, however, tell the duke what he thought, when he gave him an account of his converſation with her; but left him as much hope as a man who is loved may reaſonably have.

They ſet out the next day, and went after the king; the viſcount wrote to madam de Cleves at monſieur de Nemours's requeſt, and in a ſecond letter, which ſoon followed the firſt, the duke writ a line or two in his own hand; but madam de Cleves determined not to depart from the rules ſhe had preſcribed herſelf; and fearing the accidents that might happen from letters, informed the viſcount that ſhe would receive his letters no more, if he continued to ſpeak of monſieur de Nemours; and did it in ſo peremptory a manner, that the duke deſired him not to mention him.

During the abſence of the court, which was gone to conduct the queen of Spain as far as Poitou, madam de Cleves continued at home; and the more diſtant ſhe was from monſieur de Nemours, and from every thing that could put her in mind of him, the more ſhe recalled the memory of the prince of Cleves, which ſhe made it her glory to preſerve; the reaſons ſhe had not to marry the duke de Nemours appeared ſtrong with reſpect to her duty, but invincible with reſpect to her

quiet; the opinion ſhe had, that marriage would put an end to his love, and the torments of jealouſy, which ſhe thought the infallible conſequences of marriage, gave her the proſpect of a certain unhappineſs if ſhe conſented to his deſires; on the other hand, ſhe thought it impoſſible, if he were preſent, to refuſe the moſt amiable man in the world, the man who loved her, and whom ſhe loved, and to oppoſe him in a thing that was neither inconſiſtent with virtue nor decency. She thought that nothing but abſence and diſtance could give her the power to do it; and ſhe found ſhe ſtood in need of them, not only to ſupport her reſolution not to marry, but even to keep her from ſeeing monſieur de Nemours; ſhe reſolved, therefore, to take a long journey, in order to paſs away the time which decency obliged her to ſpend in retirement; the fine eſtate ſhe had near the Pyrenees ſeemed the moſt proper place ſhe could make choice of; ſhe ſet out a few days before the court returned, and writ at parting to the viſcount, to conjure him not to think of once enquiring after her, or of writing to her.

Monſieur de Nemours was as much troubled at this journey, as another would have been for the death of his miſtreſs. The thought of being deprived ſo long a time of the ſight of madam de Cleves grieved him to the ſoul, eſpecially as it happened at a time when he had lately enjoyed the pleaſure of ſeeing her, and of ſeeing her moved by his paſſion; however, he could do nothing but afflict himſelf, and his affliction increaſed every day. Madam de Cleves, whoſe ſpirits had been ſo much agitated, was no ſooner arrived at her country-ſeat, but ſhe fell deſperately ill; the news of it was brought to court; monſieur de Nemours was inconſolable; his grief proceeded even to deſpair and extravagance; the viſcount had much ado to hinder him from diſcovering his paſſion in public, and as much ado to keep him from going in perſon to know how ſhe did; the relation and friendſhip between her and the viſcount ſerved as an excuſe for ſending frequent meſſengers; at laſt they heard

heard ſhe was out of the extremity of danger ſhe had been in; but continued in a languiſhing malady, that left but little hopes of life.

The nature of her diſeaſe gave her a proſpect of death, both near and at a diſtance, and ſhewed her the things of this life in a very different view from that in which they are ſeen by people in health: the neceſſity of dying, to which ſhe ſaw herſelf ſo near, taught her to wean herſelf from the world, and the lingeringneſs of her diſtemper brought her to a habit in it; yet, when ſhe was a little recovered, ſhe found that monſieur de Nemours was not effaced from her heart; but to defend herſelf againſt him, ſhe called to her aid all the reaſons which ſhe thought ſhe had never to marry him; after a long conflict in herſelf, ſhe ſubdued the relics of that paſſion which had been weakened by the ſentiments her illneſs had given her; the thoughts of death had reproached her with the memory of monſieur de Cleves, and this remembrance was ſo agreeable to her duty, that it made deep impreſſions in her heart; the paſſions and engagements of the world appeared to her in the light, in which they appear to perſons who have more great and more diſtant views. The weakneſs of her body, which was brought very low, aided her in preſerving theſe ſentiments; but as ſhe knew what power opportunities have over the wiſeſt reſolutions, ſhe would not hazard the breach of thoſe ſhe had taken, by returning into any place where ſhe might ſee him ſhe loved; ſhe retired, under pretence of change of air, into a convent, but without declaring a ſettled reſolution of quitting the court.

Upon the firſt news of it, monſieur de Nemours felt the weight of this retreat, and ſaw the importance of it; he preſently thought he had nothing more to hope, but omitted not any thing that might oblige her to return; he prevailed with the queen to write; he made the viſcount not only write, but go to her; but all to no purpoſe. The viſcount ſaw her, but ſhe did not tell him ſhe had fixed her reſolution; and yet he judged

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ſhe would never return to court. At laſt monſieur de Nemours himſelf went to her, under pretence of uſing the waters. She was extremely grieved and ſurprized to hear he was come, and ſent him word by a perſon of merit about her, that ſhe deſired him not to take it ill, if ſhe did not expoſe herſelf to the danger of ſeeing him, and of deſtroying, by his preſence, thoſe ſentiments ſhe was obliged to preſerve; that ſhe deſired he ſhould know, that having found it both againſt her duty and peace of mind to yield to the inclination ſhe had to be his, all things elſe were become ſo indifferent to her, that ſhe had renounced them for ever; that ſhe thought only of another life, and had no ſentiment remaining as to this, but the deſire of ſeeing him in the ſame diſpoſitions ſhe was in.

Monſieur de Nemours was like to have expired in the preſence of the lady who told him this; he begged her a thouſand times to return to madam de Cleves, and to get leave for him to ſee her; but ſhe told him, the princeſs had not only forbidden her to come back with any meſſage from him, but even to report the converſation that ſhould paſs between them. At length, monſieur de Nemours was obliged to go back, oppreſſed with the heavieſt grief a man is capable of, who has loſt all hopes of ever ſeeing again a perſon whom he loved not only with the moſt violent, but moſt natural and ſincere paſſion that ever was; yet ſtill he was not utterly diſcouraged, but uſed all imaginable methods to make her alter her reſolution; at laſt, after ſeveral years, time and abſence abated his grief, and extinguiſhed his paſſion. Madam de Cleves lived in a manner that left no probability of her ever returning to court; ſhe ſpent one part of the year in that religious houſe, and the other at her own, but ſtill continued the auſterity of retirement, and conſtantly employ'd herſelf in exerciſes more holy than the ſevereſt convents can pretend to; and her life, though it was ſhort, left examples of inimitable virtues.

THE END.

THE

FRUITLESS ENQUIRY:

WRITTEN BY

MRS. HAYWOOD.

CHARACTER OF THE

FRUITLESS ENQUIRY;

AND

ANECDOTES OF ITS AUTHOR,

BY THE EDITOR.

THE following pages are ſelected from a Novel* under the ſame title, and from which I have only made extracts; as ſome of the ſtories it contains are inconſiſtent with the plan of this work, as being either groſs in the ſubjects, or indelicate in the expreſſion.

* By Mrs. Eliza Haywood, a voluminous noveliſt, born in 1696. In the early part of her life ſhe wrote a number of looſe tales, and dealt a good deal in perſonal ſlander. Mrs. Manley's *Atalantis* gave her a hint, upon which ſhe framed *The Court of Carimania*, and the new *Utopia*, with other pieces of the ſame nature. She attempted dramatic writing, and acting alſo; but met with little ſucceſs in either. However, ſhe ſhewed herſelf a writer of great ingenuity in the manner of treating her ſubjects; but her latter works, among which this is one, have made proper atonement for the indelicacy and immorality of her former writings, as ſhe appears to be a ſtrong advocate on the ſide of Decency and Virtue. *The Female Spectator*, *The Hiſtory of Betſy Thoughtleſs*, *Jemmy and Jenny Jeſſamy*, *The Inviſible Spy*, and *A Preſent for a Servant-maid*, are among this latter claſs of her compoſitions. She died in 1759.

THE

CHARACTER, &c.

The idea on which this piece is founded, has a good deal of merit in it; as tending to abate envy, and conciliate content; by shewing, in a variety of instances, that appearances are frequently fallacious; that perfect or permanent happiness is not the lot of mortal life; and that peace of mind and rational enjoyment are only to be found in bosoms free from guilt, and from intimate connection with the guilty.

THE FRUITLESS ENQUIRY.

A Certain nobleman of Venice, dying in the prime of his years, left behind him a widow called Miramillia, juſtly eſteemed one of the moſt lovely women of the age, and a little ſon not exceeding ſix years old; ſo dear to his mother, that though her beauty, wealth, and accompliſhments, attracted the love and admiration of almoſt as many as beheld her, and the nobleſt youth in the republic deſired her in marriage; yet did ſhe decline all the advantages offered her for this darling of her ſoul, and reſolved to continue the remainder of her days in a ſingle ſtate; fearing, that in beſtowing herſelf, ſhe ſhould alſo be obliged to relinquiſh the power ſhe had of managing the eſtate for him, to one who would leſs conſult his intereſt. Never was mother more anxious for the welfare of a child, nor never did any child ſeem more to deſerve the affections of a parent; ſo greatly did he improve on the education ſhe allowed him, that his behaviour was her pride, as well as pleaſure: as he encreaſed in years, he encreaſed alſo in every manly grace. There was no art, no ſcience, no exerciſe, befitting

fitting his quality, of which he was not a perfect maſter; and in many of them he excelled thoſe whoſe profeſſion it was to inſtruct.

Till he arrived at the age of twenty, did his happy mother glory in maternal fondneſs; and was ſo far from believing ſhe ever ſhould have reaſon to do otherwiſe, that ſhe ſcarce knew how to pity the misfortunes of thoſe who lamented the undutifulneſs or ill management of their children: but, alas! on how weak a foundation do all human joys depend, and how little ought we to triumph in the tranſient bleſſings of fate, which in a moment may vaniſh, and in their room as poignant ills ariſe! In the height of her ſatisfaction, juſt when ſhe had ſeen the promiſing bloom of this young man arrive at maturity, and every wiſh was to its height completed, then all at once did miſery fall on her, and ſhe became more wretched than ever ſhe had been bleſt.

Early one morning did this beloved ſon go out, as was frequently his cuſtom, to indulge meditation in a fine wilderneſs adjacent to the caſtle; but night not bringing him home, nor the enſuing day, nor many others affording any tidings of him, the fears and perplexities of a mother ſo tenderly fond as was his, are not to be conceived. Through every part of the city ſhe ſent in ſearch of him, but all her meſſengers returned without ſucceſs; he could not be heard of, nor could any perſon be found that had ſeen him: days, weeks, and months paſt on in this manner, and quite raving with her griefs, ſhe fell into a ſort of ſuperſtitious credulity, which before ſhe had deſpiſed; it was that of applying to fortune-tellers, in a vain expectation of knowing that from man, which Heaven permits not the diſcovery of even to the angels themſelves. But her good ſenſe not ſuffering her to place any great dependance on what they ſaid, ſhe no ſooner heard the predictions of one, than ſhe went to another, comparing them together, believing that if they agreed,

they

they might be worthy of belief; but being different, one telling her he would ſpeedily return, another that he was dead, a third that he was married to a woman unworthy of him; but a fourth, wiſer than the reſt, would not pretend to give her any direct account, but only told her, that to engage his return, ſhe ſhould procure a ſhirt made for him by the hands of a perſon ſo completely contented in mind, that there was no wiſh but that ſhe enjoyed. If you can prevail on ſuch a woman to undertake this little piece of work, ſaid he, before it be finiſhed, you will infallibly hear news of your ſon; but you muſt be certain, continued he, that the perſon you employ be perfectly at eaſe; if the leaſt anxious thought, the moſt minute perplexity, diſcontent, or care, ruffles her mind, or ever throws a heavineſs upon her ſpirits, the work will be of no effect.---Though this afflicted mother had too much good ſenſe to imagine ſuch a thing could be of any conſequence to the obtaining her deſires, yet the inchantment being of ſo innocent a nature, ſhe reſolved to make the experiment; and to that end, ſet herſelf to think which of her acquaintance was the moſt qualified for this important piece of ſempſtry. One ſhe knew had vaſt poſſeſſions, all the grandeur which the world idolizes, beauty, wit, health, and a ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, which rendered her capable of enjoying thoſe bleſſings; but then ſhe was married to a man of ſo perverſe a nature, that it took up her whole ſtudy to pleaſe him; and the little ſucceſs ſhe had in that endeavour, frequently gave her many bitter perturbations. Another, in all appearance, was poſſeſt of every thing that can be wiſhed, a wealthy and good huſband, many fine children, and the general eſteem and good character of the world; but ſhe had made this lady the confidante of her paſſion for a young gentleman; and in that criminal inclination were all the pleaſures of her life overwhelmed and loſt. One had an undutiful ſon, another an unfortunate daughter, a third an extrava-

gant

gant husband, a fourth an unloving one, a fifth was distracted with a step-dame's overlooking eye, a sixth had married a man, whose children by a former venture were an eternal plague upon her spirits; one had so much ready cash, that she was always in care how to bestow it with the least hazard, and most advantage; another was perplexed for want of it, and the exigencies to which persons in that misfortune are reduced. Few there were to whom she could apply with any hope of success, if it were really truth what the predictor had endeavoured to make her believe: but among the number of those was a lady whose name was Anziana; she was married to one of the chief of the nobility, a man scarce to be equalled for his personal charms, or the improvements of education; and one who, both before and after his marriage, had given a thousand testimonies of the most tender regard for her: never did any pair appear to live together in a more perfect harmony; three fine sons and two beautiful daughters were the product of their loves, all lovely, all hopeful, and promising a future age of happiness to their glad parents. Where could contentment dwell, if not in such a family? Who can be completely blest, if Anziana was not? To her therefore it was that she resolved to have recourse, and doubted not but to receive from her friendship that favour which she imagined was in her power to grant.

In pursuance of this design, she again set herself at her long neglected toilet, and resumed those ornaments which till now she had not worn since the loss of her dear son; and when drest with all her former exactness, went to the house of Anziana, where she was received by that lady with all the demonstrations imaginable of a sincere friendship; but when she related to her the errand on which she came, she looked extremely surprized, and would fain have persuaded her from giving any adherence to advice which seemed so perfectly chimerical; but the other continuing to insist on it, and appearing

appearing ſomewhat reſentful that ſhe ſhould refuſe ſo ſmall a trouble, when it would do her ſo great a piece of ſervice; at laſt ſhe conſented to make the trial, on condition ſhe would remain in her houſe for the ſpace of eight days: at the end of which time, ſaid ſhe, if you perceive nothing which may render me incapable of ſerving you in the way you mention, I ſhall willingly undertake it. The ſorrowful mother could not but comply with ſo reaſonable a requeſt, and in doing ſo, found every thing agreeable to that character of perfect tranquillity, to which the prognoſticator had directed her. She now no longer doubted but ſhe ſhould be able to make the experiment, if there were any dependance to be placed in the words of theſe ſoothſayers. Never had ſhe beheld a family better managed; every thing was done with that eaſe, that regularity, and concord, that buſineſs was a pleaſure: the ſervants ſeemed to obey more through love than fear, the miſtreſs had not the trouble of commanding; ſo ready were they to obſerve her very looks and motions, that what ſhe would have done, was ſo before her deſire could form itſelf into words: the children obſerved the ſame decorum; but theſe were petty felicities compared with that which flowed from a conjugal affection, ſo tender, ſo obliging, ſo ardent, and unchangeable, as that appeared to be between Anziana and her huſband count Caprera: never were endearments carried to a higher pitch, nor had more the look of ſincerity. In fine, all that can be conceived of felicity was theirs, and was thought an exception to that general rule, that perfect happineſs is not to be found on earth.

The time prefixed by Anziana being elapſed, her diſtreſſed viſitor entreated the performance of her promiſe; to which the other, in a melancholy accent, thus replied: Alas! ſaid ſhe, how liable are we to be deceived by appearances! How little does the outward ſhow demonſtrate, ſometimes, the real diſpoſition of the heart! I, who ſeem the moſt fortunate of my ſex, am indeed the

the moſt wretched; nor is it in the power of fate to load me with ſuperior ills. But to eaſe the amazement in which my words have involved you, follow me, and you ſhall be informed in full of the whole diſmal cauſe. As ſhe ſpoke this, ſhe turned haſtily towards the door of the chamber, and the other going after her as ſhe had deſired, they paſſed through ſeveral rooms, till they came to a long gallery, at the end of which was a cloſet. There Anziana ſtopped, and taking a key out of her pocket, opened it, and went in, deſiring the other to do the ſame: but with what horror and affright was her ſoul invaded, when, as ſoon as ſhe entered, the firſt object that preſented itſelf to her, was the ſkeleton of a man, with arms extended wide, as if in act to ſeize the adventurous gazer, and on the breaſt was fixed a label; which, as ſoon as ſhe was enough recovered from that terror which ſo unexpected and ſo ſhocking a ſight had plunged her in, to be able to look upon, Anziana took her by the hand, and bringing her nearer, ſhewed it her, containing theſe words, which to make them yet more dreadful, were writ in blood.

" Remember, Anziana, it is for your crime that I " am thus; and let a juſt contrition take up your en- " ſuing days, and peace be ever a ſtranger to your " ſoul, till you become as I am!"

Let the reader imagine himſelf in this lady's place, and he will then be able to conceive ſome part of that aſtoniſhment ſhe was in at beholding an object of this dire nature, in a houſe where nothing but mirth and chearfulneſs appeared to reign: to deſcribe it, is not in the power of language; therefore, I ſhall only ſay, that it took from her the power of ſpeech; and though ſhe paſſionately longed for the explanation of ſo ſtrange an adventure, yet her tongue refuſed to obey the dictates of her heart; and by the wild confuſion of her looks, and eyes half ſtarting from their ſpheres, alone it was that ſhe could make known her wonder, or her curioſity:

curioſity; but Anziana perfectly underſtanding what it was ſhe deſired, made her turn from that ungrateful object, and ſit down by her on a couch ſome diſtance from it, where ſhe began thus: Had I not been convinced of your diſcretion, ſaid ſhe, I ſhould not have taken this method to ſhew how improper a perſon I am to undertake the taſk you came hither to employ me in: I will therefore exact no promiſes from you of preſerving my ſecret, nor deſire any other ſecurity for it than your own honour; but as I have begun with bringing you into this cloſet, which, ſince thus furniſhed, has never been entered by any but myſelf, I will proceed to reveal by what ſtrange means this dreadful gueſt was harboured here: but becauſe I cannot do it clearly, without going back to ſome paſſages of the former part of my life, you muſt excuſe the length of my narration; which will at leaſt be of this ſervice to you, that your own woes will ſit more lightly on you, when you ſhall know how infinitely more heavy thoſe are under which I labour. Theſe words drew a flood of tears from her to whom they were addreſſed, as thinking it impoſſible for any misfortune to exceed that which ſhe ſuſtained; but compoſing herſelf as well as ſhe could, ſhe prepared to give attention to what the other was about to ſay, who immediately began the relation ſhe had promiſed in theſe terms.

THE HISTORY OF ANZIANA, SIGNIOR LORENZO, AND COUNT CAPRERA.

IT is not unknown to you, ſaid ſhe, that I am deſcended from one of the beſt families in this republic, and that I had a fortune equal to my birth; I ſhall therefore paſs over in ſilence the years of my

childhood, nothing happening to me worthy of remark, till my fourteenth year: at which time, many there were who ſolicited me for marriage; among the number of whom was Signior Lorenzo, a young gentleman whoſe equal yet I never ſaw, nor can believe the whole world can produce. At firſt, the deference I paid him I thought only was owing to his merit, and that all who knew him treated him with the ſame. But, alas! too ſoon I found my admiration proceeded from a ſofter motive, and that it was love that made me ſo quick-ſighted to his perfections; and had ſenſe enough to diſtinguiſh, that though he was infinitely deſerving, I ſaw all his graces through a magnifying glaſs, and adored what others but approved: the infancy of love, however, affords too much pleaſure to a youthful heart for the efforts of reaſon to be able to repel it. I ſuffered the ſweet inchantment to grow upon me, till it overwhelmed and ſunk all other conſiderations; and never reflecting on the difficulties which might ariſe to ſeparate us, indulged the dear delight his ſociety afforded; and while I liſtened to his vows, knew neither fear nor grief: yet had I been capable of thought, how eaſy had it been to me, to have foreſeen my father would not look on Lorenzo with my eyes, and that all his accompliſhments would not have been ſufficient to make up for the diſparity of his birth and fortune! All at once, therefore, did my misfortune come upon me; and when I was arrived at the utmoſt extreme of paſſion, did I receive a command to check it, from his mouth whence there was no appeal: in fine, juſt as Lorenzo had obtained my permiſſion to demand me of my father, did he order me to ſee him no more; and ſeverely reprimanded me for having given any encouragement to his addreſſes. I durſt not but promiſe to obey, though Heaven knows how little my heart was capable of making good my words: now did I begin to find there were bitters enough in love to empoiſon all the ſweets of it; but the diſeaſe had

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ſpread too far to hope a cure; nor indeed did I endeavour at it. I apprized Lorenzo, by letter, of what had happened, and appointed to meet him the next day at the houſe of a perſon whom I made the confidant of this affair. He failed not to come; and inſtead of fulfilling the dictates of my duty in taking an eternal leave of him, I ſuffered myſelf to be ſwayed wholly by thoſe of my love, and entered into the moſt ſolemn obligation that vows could form, never to be but his. That ceremony which is called Marriage, is infinitely leſs binding than the repeated oaths I kneeling made, and the curſes I imprecated on myſelf if ever I ſwerved from them: death itſelf was not to diſſolve the contract; but the ſurvivor ſwore to pay the ſame regard to the memory of the deceaſed as when living, and in a condition to know and to return thoſe proofs of fidelity. Not long after this, my father unhappily incurred the diſpleaſure of the ſenate to ſo high a degree, that he ſtood in need of all the intereſt he had, to preſerve his eſtate from being forfeited, and himſelf ſent into baniſhment: of all the friends that appeared for him, count Caprera was the moſt ſerviceable; and indeed it was wholly owing to his great power, and ſteady adherence to the cauſe he had eſpouſed, that my father was acquitted. So important a ſervice required the moſt grateful retributions; nor was my father deficient in paying them: he offered him the half of that eſtate he had preſerved; but he would accept no other recompence than Anziana: he declared himſelf poſſeſt of the moſt violent paſſion for me, and that he had been prevented from diſcovering it but by the apprehenſions of his unworthineſs, till the lucky opportunity offered of conferring an obligation on my family, which, as he ſaid, might give ſome pretence to hope he ſhould not be refuſed. Had my father never experienced his friendſhip, it is highly improbable there would have been any occaſion for ſuch a fear; the count, I muſt acknowledge, notwithſtanding the little effect his charms

have been able to work on me, being poſſeſt of every advantage that can make marriage pleaſing. But there is an awe which accompanies true affection, and indeed is often fatal to it. It was ſo, at leaſt, to that the count had for me, ſince, had he ſooner made an offering of his heart, perhaps I never ſhould have diſpoſed of mine to Lorenzo. Then might we have all been happy, nor would this dreadful ſpectacle have diſtracted my ſight, which brings the fatal paſt for ever preſent to my tormented mind: but ſuch was the decree of all-diſpoſing Heaven, nor muſt I dare to murmur.---With theſe words, the ſwelling tears, in ſpite of her efforts to the contrary, burſt their paſſage through her eyes, and ſhe was ſome time before ſhe could recover herſelf to proſecute her ſtory; but when ſhe did, it was in this manner:

My father, reſumed ſhe, was perfectly tranſported at this offer of the count's, and without conſulting my inclination in the affair, readily promiſed I ſhould be his wife, and that the marriage ſhould be ſolemnized in a few days. How terrible a ſurprize, therefore, was it to me, when ſitting one day in my chamber alone, contemplating on the perfections of my dear Lorenzo, my father entered, and informed me what I have been juſt now relating! I knew him poſitive in all his reſolutions, and he expreſſed this on the account of the obligations he had to the count, and the honour our family would receive in an alliance with him, with an unuſual warmth, and arbitrary air: I durſt not utter the leaſt ſyllable in oppoſition to what he ſaid, but he ſaw enough in my countenance to make him know I was extremely diſſatisfied at it. What! cried he, is it with frowns and downcaſt eyes that you receive the news of ſuch a bleſſing? Throw off ſo perverſe a ſullenneſs, and prepare to treat the count, who will be here this night, with that reſpect and gratitude which his ſervices demand from my family; or reſolve to be no more a part of it, but an alien for ever from my name and favour. Nothing can ore cer.ain, had I confeſſed the impoſſibility there

there was for me to return the count's affection, and the obligations I had laid myself under to Lorenzo, than that the friendship he had for the former of them would have raised his indignation to the utmost violence against me; and fear at that time getting the better of my love, I fell at his feet, entreating his forgiveness, and assuring him of a perfect obedience; at which he appeared satisfied. But easily perceiving I was far from being so in reality, he left me to myself, believing that the best way to calm the disorders of my soul, and make it fit to receive the impression he desired. But Oh! when at liberty to give a loose to thought and to reflection, Heaven only knows the agonies I sustained; the idea of my dear Lorenzo, his passionate affection, the solemn contract we had made, the reiterated vows by which it was confirmed, came fresh into my mind, and made me for some moments resolve to endure all things, rather than make this double sacrifice of my love and faith: but then my father's power, the fear of being turned out a beggar, and the possibility that, in such a disgraced and distressful state, Lorenzo, for whose sake I should become so, might also abandon me; the miseries of poverty, and the unpitying world's contempt and censure, glared on my terrified imagination, and worked so far on the timorousness of my nature, as to counterbalance all that the softer passion could suggest, and even absolve my breach of vow. Long did I struggle in this painful conflict, and, wholly unable to determine to which of the prevailing dictates I should yield, at last a medium presented itself, which flattered me with some hope of evading the wretchedness I feared, in suffering myself to be overcome by either; it was to dissemble a contentment in the count's addresses; and, by seeming not to oppose my father's will, gain time and opportunity to disappoint it totally. When the count came, I treated him with that respect which was due to his quality, and the obligations we had received from him; nor did he expect more at his first visit from a maid of

my years; in thoſe he afterwards made me, I diſcovered him to be maſter of ſo many perfections, that though my vow and inclinations bound me to Lorenzo, I could not help thinking, that I might have been infinitely happy in ſuch a huſband. In a word, I had all the eſteem and friendſhip for him that one can have for the moſt amiable and deſerving brother: but this was not that ſort of affection he wiſhed to inſpire me with, and he could not forbear complaining of my coldneſs, in terms the moſt moving that love and wit could form. A thouſand times have I been about to let him into the ſecret of my ſoul, and generouſly confeſs, that I had unwarily beſtowed my heart and faith before I knew the honour he intended me; had I done ſo, I might have ſaved that dreadful ſcene which too ſoon enſued. But ſhame, and the fear of being expoſed to the indignation of my father, or rather my ill genius, would not ſuffer me to make this declaration, which alone could have been of ſervice. For often ſince has count Caprera proteſted to me in the moſt ſolemn manner, that had he known the true ſtate of my heart, he would have deſiſted his ſuit, and choſe rather to have been unhappy himſelf, than have made me ſo by an enforced marriage. But he, alas! was far from gueſſing at the truth, nor had I power to inform him. But it was not ſo with my father. He had intelligence of the private meetings I ſtill had with Lorenzo, and doubted not but it was the violence of my affection for him, that made me receive the addreſſes of the count with ſo little pleaſure. I had till now prevailed on him to defer our marriage, under the pretence that time might make me enter into it with leſs reluctance. But he was no longer to be put off by theſe excuſes; he knew too well my ſecret, and was reſolved to diſappoint whatever intentions I might have in favour of my paſſion. Coming one morning into my chamber with a ſternneſs in his air and countenance, which, before he ſpoke, gave me to underſtand ſome part of my misfortune: Anziana, ſaid he,

he, your tears, and pretended averſion for marriage, have hitherto perſuaded me to delay the performance of that promiſe I long ſince made to count Caprera; but I am now too well informed of the reaſons which have made you blind to that happineſs Heaven offers you in a huſband of his quality and merit, and am determined that this day ſhall be the laſt of your continuing in a virgin ſtate; or if you refuſe to obey me, of being called my daughter. Chuſe, therefore, either to be the moſt fortunate and envied woman in Venice by marrying with this nobleman, or quit my houſe, my name, and ſight for ever, and become the moſt accurſt, abandoned, deſpiſed, and wretched of your ſex. It was to no purpoſe that I threw myſelf at his feet, entreated, wept, almoſt died before him. No rocks were more immoveable than his relentleſs breaſt; nor could all my prayers, my tears, my ſwoonings, obtain even one day more: as ſoon as he was gone out of the room, I ſent my woman, who was privy to my moſt ſecret thoughts, in ſearch of Lorenzo, to whom I ordered her to relate the whole truth of what had paſſed; reſolving, if he gave any encouragement to my elopement, to leave my father's houſe, and dare all the miſeries he had threatened me with, rather than become falſe to my love and vows; but, unfortunately for both, he was gone that morning to the houſe of a relation, who lived at a good diſtance from Venice, and had ſent for him on ſome extraordinary buſineſs. What could I now do? To whom could I have recourſe? or what ſecurity for protection from the inſults of a barbarous world? Much had I heard of the inconſtancy and thankleſsneſs of faithleſs men, and how could I be ſure Lorenzo was not one of thoſe? That peace of mind which I muſt forfeit in marrying with the count, I looked on as a trifle, when compared with the loſs of my reputation, and the want of the neceſſaries of life: and as for the faith I had vowed to Lorenzo, I doubted not but the neceſſity I was under would excuſe me from a breach of it. I loved the one indeed

with an unquenchable affection, and had but a bare eſteem for the other; it was therefore the utmoſt violence to my inclinations, even but to think of complying with my father's commands; but as I could foreſee nothing but miſery in refuſing, I was at laſt determined to do as he would have me; and to that end ſent my woman to him, hearing he was in his cloſet, to let him know I was ready to obey him. But, alas! ſhe was no ſooner departed with the meſſage, than the idea of that dear loved youth roſe with its charms in my tormented ſoul, upbraiding me with perjury and ingratitude, levity and cowardice of nature; methought I ſaw him dying with deſpair, and crying out to Heaven to revenge his wrongs. Fully poſſeſt with this imagination, I was about to call my woman back, and, true to love, deſpiſe all other ills: as I was riſing from my chair with this intention, a book fell from the ſhelf; ſome accident happened to ſhake it juſt upon my head; which opening, I ſaw had the title of L'Inconſtance d'Amour, a little French novel, which I remembered to have read ſome time before, and that it contained ſeveral little hiſtories of the ingratitude of mankind, and the little they thought themſelves obliged, even from the greateſt condeſcenſions our ſex could make: I looked on this accident as a kind of warning to me, not to truſt too much to their honour, and inſtead of purſuing my deſign, began to read in it; where the firſt ſtory I happened to caſt my eyes on, was a kind of parallel with my own; it being of a young lady who had forſook her father, friends and country, for the dear ſake of love; yet had no ſooner reduced herſelf to that extremity which the want of them muſt infallibly draw on, than the ungrateful wretch, for whom ſhe was become thus miſerable, told her, he was ſorry for what had befallen her, that he would be her friend as far as a few pieces, or give her a character to get a ſervice if ſhe were diſpoſed to accept of one; but ſhe could not expect he would marry a woman in her circumſtances. Heavens! cried I, as I

was

was reading, ſhould Lorenzo be of this humour, what an extravagance of wretchedneſs would be my portion, (and why ſhould I hope a better fate?) who pretends to love, but ſays and ſwears as much as he has done? But put the caſe, continued I, after a little reflection, that he ſhould excel his ſex as much in honour, as he does in all perſonal perfections; what happineſs could there be in ſuch a ſtate of obligation and dependance? Would not his friends and kindred be perpetually upbraiding him, that he had married a woman without any other dowry than her love? Would not my clothes, nay my very meat, be cavilled at, as too extravagant? I cannot bear the thought, cried I again, and will purſue my reſolution. It is reaſon bids me, and all the ſoftening follies of my inclinations fly before his force. I was thus debating within myſelf, when my woman returned, and told me, my father was infinitely pleaſed with my return to duty, and had ſent me, to grace the ceremony he was preparing to ſolemnize that night, a ſtring of diamonds for my neck, of a vaſt largeneſs, and the moſt glorious luſtre I had ever ſeen. I was all my life a great admirer of fine things; and as it was merely the fear of being obliged to live without them, that had made me yield to marry the count; ſo this addition to thoſe my father's indulgence had before beſtowed on me, greatly ſtrengthened me in that reſolution. To make it yet more firm, the count ſent me by his gentleman a bracelet of pearl, which an anceſtor of his had taken from the Turks, and was the moſt orient and richeſt of any in the republic. To add to all theſe baits, ſeveral relations, whom my father had invited to be preſent at the marriage, ſeemed, the whole day, each to endeavour to outvie the other in praiſing count Caprera. His wit, his elegance of behaviour, his fine ſhape, the delicacy of his complexion, the gracefulneſs of his air, his good-humour, honour, generoſity, the greatneſs of his family, and the immenſe ſums of money his father had left him in poſſeſſion of,

were the only topicks of converſation; and all agreed, that I could not but be extremely bleſt in ſuch a huſband. Betwixt the variety of company and diſcourſe, my ſpirits were ſo much hurried, that I had no leiſure for reflection; and Lorenzo was either not remembered, or in ſuch a manner as to be no hindrance to the completing the wiſhes of his rival. We were married about eight at night by my father's chaplain, and after a magnificent colation put to bed. But here, what the noiſe and buſtle of the day repelled, the ſilence of the night called back; not Caprera, but Lorenzo, was now the ſubject of my meditations, and it was in vain that that obliging huſband repeated the vow he had given before the prieſt in a more ſoft and endearing manner, than thoſe who had the ordering of the ceremony had ever tenderneſs enough to form; the abſent lover took up all my thoughts; and that reluctance with which I ſuffered his embraces, was not, as he then imagined, owing to a virgin baſhfulneſs, but to the ardency of my wiſhes for another. I now found that love had not loſt the leaſt ground in my heart, and having but by the extremity of my fear, been compelled a while to ſcreen its influence, theſe fears removed, blazed out again with the ſame violence as ever. Never was there a more unhappy bride. The night I paſt in tears, and early in the morning I forſook my bed, in ſpite of the count's endeavours to detain me; and going into my cloſet with my favourite woman, diſburthened ſome part of the heavy anguiſh of my ſoul in complaints: fain would I have written to Lorenzo, to acquaint him with what I had been compelled to do, and entreat his pardon for my breach of vow; but could not venture to do it while he remained at ſo great a diſtance, not thinking it ſafe to truſt a letter of that conſequence to the poſt. With the utmoſt impatience I longed for his return, flattering myſelf that I ſhould be more at eaſe, when he ſhould let me know he had forgiven my involuntary crime. In languiſhments unbecoming the character of a wife, though

though then I thought them innocent, did I linger out the days of his abſence; the count and my father omitting nothing which they thought might bring me into a better humour; though the latter of them, whenever he was alone, did not fail to tell me, that he was not unacquainted with the motive of my diſguſt, and that if balſams failed to work, corroſives hereafter ſhould be applied. But neither threats nor perſuaſions were of any effect to make me alter my manner of behaviour; and it is moſt certain, that had not the count loved me to a very great degree of tenderneſs, he muſt have hated and deſpiſed me for my ingratitude, and forgetfulneſs of the ſtation to which he had raiſed me.

At length my fatal wiſhes had ſucceſs, Lorenzo returned to Venice; which I no ſooner was informed of, then I ſent my confidante to him with a letter which contained theſe lines.

" IT is needleſs to tell you, that I have put count " Caprera in poſſeſſion of that title which ought only to " be yours. I doubt not but you are already ſuffi- " ciently infomed of my ſeeming guilt; but of my real " innocence you are not, you cannot yet be ſenſible. " You know not with what ſeverities I was threatened " by a barbarous and inexorable father, nor can you " gueſs how terrible was the conflict I endured betwixt " love and duty; be aſſured, you never were dearer " than at that moment when I gave myſelf for ever " from you, nor can the name of Caprera make any " change in my ſentiments; I am Anziana ſtill. Fate, " cruel fate, has diſpoſed my perſon to another, but " the better part of me, my ſoul, is ever yours. Oh! " then forgive what it was impoſſible to avoid, with- " out being driven to extremities, ſuch as would have " made me deſpair of retaining your affections, the " only thing I ever hoped, the only thing I ever feared; " yes, you muſt pardon me, muſt pity, and muſt love " me too; nor can I think that wiſh a crime againſt

" him to whom compulſion, not inclination, gave my
" hand; but were it ſo, it is here excuſed by the ne-
" ceſſity. I have been ſo much accuſtomed to proofs of
" your affection, that they make a part of my life, and
" when they ceaſe, the other muſt infallibly be at an
" end: I believe it not impoſſible to contrive a meeting
" with you; if ſo, I charge you, do not fail to come.
" I am diſtracted till I ſee you, and receive that con-
" ſolation in my misfortunes, which it is in your power
" to afford to the unhappy, but not inconſtant

" ANZIANA.

" P. S. Write to me by the bearer, conſider op-
" portunities of this kind are now become ſcarce; and
" if you can think of any means to ſee me, more eaſy
" to be accompliſhed than I have yet been able to hit
" upon, communicate them to this faithful girl, who
" knows, as well as I, the reſtraint I labour under, not
" by the obſervance of a huſband, but a jealous father."

I ought to bluſh, continued Anziana, in repeating to you the contents of this letter, which are indeed of ſuch a nature, as might make the leaſt cenſorious believe, I had a meaning in them very different from that virtue I profeſs; but I proteſt to you, with the ſame ſincerity as I ſhall anſwer Heaven, that I was wholly free from any thought of ill; I longed indeed to ſee him; I paſſionately deſired that he would continue to love me; and how far I might have been prevailed on by that deſire and his entreaty, had I been permitted to indulge it in frequent converſations with him, I cannot, dare not to anſwer; but fate thought it ſufficient to make me miſerable without rendering me vicious alſo, and contented with the ſacrifice I had made of my peace, ſuffered me not to reſign my virtue.

He received my letter not with the tranſports of rage which I expected; and whatever diſcontents the news of my marriage had occaſioned, they were more than balanced

balanced by the pleaſure he took in the willingneſs I expreſt of continuing a correſpondence with him. The perſon whom I ſent to him was a woman of an excellent penetration; and ſhe aſſured me, in terms as plain as the ſtation ſhe was in would permit her to do to a miſtreſs, that Lorenzo was not that diſintereſted lover we had believed him to be: ſhe forbore, however, to expreſs what it was ſhe thought of him, till I had read his letter, the contents whereof are written in my heart, and never can be forgot; they were in this manner:

" THOUGH I might juſtly enough complain of " your want of faith in my repeated aſſurances, that no " change of circumſtances ſhould have the power to " alter that indelible affection I had vowed; yet to " prove how much beyond my own I prize your in- " tereſt, I wiſh you all the happineſs the marriage-bed " can yield: nor do I envy Caprera the poſſeſſion of your " perſon, ſince you ſo tranſportingly aſſure me, that " your heart is mine. You have been accuſtomed to " utter nothing but ſacred truth; if this is ſo, I ſhould " be the moſt unreaſonable and ungrateful of my ſex, " not to be highly ſatisfied with my condition; for " what may not the happy he, who rules the heart, " command! I have been talking to your obliging " meſſenger, and ſhe thinks it not impoſſible that I " might be admitted into your own houſe late at " night, when all the family are in bed; you pre- " tending an indiſpoſition, to avoid lying with the " count ——. I mention this method as the moſt " ſafe one for your reputation; for though, doubtleſs, " either of us would be welcome alone at our uſual " rendezvous; yet as you know they are people of a " ſcrupulous virtue, and we uſed to meet on other terms " than now we can be ſuppoſed to do, they might think " the liberty they allowed me with Anziana a fault, if " indulged with the wife of count Caprera: it will be " juſt the ſame, if ſeen together in any other place. I

" ſee

" ſee no hazard of diſcovery at your own houſe; but " if by any unexpected means ſuch a misfortune ſhould " arrive, be aſſured of my inviolable integrity, and that " I would ſooner loſe my life than confeſs I came thither " with your knowledge; or had any entertainment from " you, but ſuch as drove me to deſpair. I would have " you conſider of it, however; and if you approve of " this proceeding, let me know the time and hour " when I may hope to ſeize my own, and triumph over " him, who has but by force made himſelf maſter of " the right of

" The ever faithful, and
" paſſionately devoted
" LORENZO.

" P. S. You muſt extremely wrong the paſſion you " have inſpired, if you believe not I ſhall attend a " ſecond mandate with the extremeſt impatience. Re- " member that it is your part, not mine, to pity; and " I expect you to ſhow a bright example, how much " you dare for love and gratitude."

It is impoſſible to expreſs what it was I felt at reading this letter; never had I before experienced ſuch an aſtoniſhment; ſuch a ſhock.---What means he, cried I out, as ſoon as I came to the concluſion, by integrity, ſeizing his own, and triumphing over him who by force is become maſter of his right? He talks as if I had invited him to wrong the count, and had no other notion of continuing a converſation with him, than to carry on a ſhameful intrigue. Heaven! how have I been deceived in the diſpoſition of this man! I thought he loved me with ſo pure a flame, that ſenſual enjoyment never was thought on by him; but now I find his wiſhes had no other aim; and flattered by the miſtaken kindneſs of my letter, he imagines there wants only an opportunity to gratify them; and believes I am a proſtitute in my nature, and that the vileſt paſſion has dominion

dominion over my ſoul. I could not, for ſome time, enough compoſe myſelf, to hear what my woman had to ſay; but when ſhe ſpoke, it was as I before informed you; and intimating, that he expected nothing leſs than to poſſeſs me with the ſame freedom, as he would have been allowed to do, were he in count Caprera's place, I was in the utmoſt rage with myſelf, for having written in a manner to give room for ſuch a thought: but as my deſigns were wholly innocent, and meant no more than to convert the love we had bore each other into as ardent a friendſhip, I was aſhamed to think I had ſo much tenderneſs for a man of ſo low and groveling a ſoul, and who now appeared to know no more of love than the meaneſt part of it, that which the difference of ſex excites. I deſpiſed him ſo heartily, that I know not if what I felt for him, for ſome moments, might not be called loathing: my woman, ever faithful to my intereſt and fame, failed not to ſay every thing in her power to heighten this diſguſt; fain would ſhe have perſuaded me to ſend to him no more; or if I did, to write in ſuch a manner as ſhould convince him of the error he had been in, and make him aſhamed ever to ſee me more. But this advice did not reliſh with me, I ſtill perſiſted in my intention of ſeeing him; whatever hazard I ran; I fancied I could make a proſelyte of him; and was pleaſed to think, how great a glory it would be to convert this groſs and ſooty flame into one all pure and elemental. The love of ſouls I aimed to inſpire, that ſo we might enjoy a noble, diſintereſted, and platonic friendſhip. This, as far as I can be judge of my own heart, was my deſign; how far it would have ſucceeded, Heaven only knows, for I was, in a fatal manner, prevented from making the experiment. But to proceed gradually with my ſtory, after the conſideration of about a week, I writ to him in theſe terms:

" That I anſwered yours no ſooner, was owing to the " uncertainty I was in, in what manner I ſhould do it; " and

" and I know not, if Virtue will not be offended, that " I hold any correſpondence with a man, whoſe deſigns " appear to be ſo much the reverſe of thoſe inſpired by " her. For Heaven's ſake, what has emboldened you " to hope from the wife of count Caprera, what you " never dared to aſk from Anziana? If judging of your " innocence by my own, I deſired the continuance of " your friendſhip; which of my paſt actions have given " you cauſe to make ſo vile a conſtruction of my mean- " ing? How could you dare ſuſpect me guilty of a " diſhonourable thought? I told you, indeed, that I " was ſtill your lover, but it was with ſuch a kind of " love that I regarded you, as angels pay to each other " in the realms of bliſs; all pure and intellectual, free " from all groſs deſires or earthly appetite. If I look " on the breach of my vow to you as a crime, which, " though enforced, requires my whole life's penitence " to atone; how can you think I would voluntarily " violate that I have made to count Caprera before the " holy prieſt? Such love as a chaſte brother may to a " ſiſter give, I ſhall rejoice to find from you; and ſuch, " and no other, can I pay to you. If you think this " worthy your acceptance, and that we can converſe to- " gether in ſuch a manner as to have nothing to ap- " prehend from our own conſciences, we ſhall be the " better enabled to contemn what the world may ſay " of us, ſhould our converſation be diſcovered; though " not to give occaſion for cenſure, I will contrive " to keep it as private as poſſible. Send me word, " after you have well examined the nature of your de- " ſires, if you can reſtrain them within the limits I " preſcribe, and you ſhall ſee with what ſpeed I will " meet the lover of my ſoul. But endeavour not to " deceive yourſelf or me; pretend not to be what you " are not, nor imagine I do ſo; or that I am, or ever " will be, one ſtep beyond what honour will permit,

" Your lover, or your friend,

" ANZIANA.

" P. S. Burn

" P. S. Burn my letters, as I do yours the mo-
" ment I receive them; but lay the contents of this
" up in your heart; that if you ſwerve in any point
" from the injunction it lays you under, you may not
" plead forgetfulneſs. Adieu! As you perſevere in
" virtue you ſhall continue to be dear to me."

Fool that I was, and vain of the power of my own perſuaſion, I doubted not but this letter would make a convert of him, and longed for my meſſenger's return, which I was perfectly aſſured in my mind would bring me an anſwer ſuch as I wiſhed; nor was I greatly deceived: he had too much of the artifice of his ſex in him to contradict what I ſaid, till he had an opportunity to benefit himſelf by it; at leaſt I judge ſo by what I have ſince been told: the contents of what he wrote ran thus:

" VIRTUE, fair angel! has many branches, nor
" is chaſtity always the moſt ſhining one it bears;
" gratitude and compaſſion are allowed to be the prime
" graces of humanity; and when oppoſed to theſe,
" the other degenerates to a vice. Is it to be of a
" piece with Heaven, to deſtroy the man who adores
" you, to inflict curſes where bleſſings are implored,
" and be cruel to a wretch who throws himſelf upon
" your mercy? Oh conſider, Anziana! nor let a too
" ſtrict adherence to one virtue make you become
" guilty of injuring all the others. Even juſtice too
" you forfeit, ſince you were mine before you were
" Caprera's: how often, dear perjured beauty! have
" you called Heaven and every ſaint to witneſs,
" that you never would be another's! and if com-
" pelled by arbitrary power to falſify thoſe vows,
" muſt you alſo join in the wrong? You might be
" forced into the arms of the count, but by your
" own will are only debarred from mine. I ſoli-
" cit you, therefore, not to an act of ſhame, but
" juſtice:

" juſtice: I will, however, inſiſt no farther on this
" theme till I have the bleſſing of your preſence; if
" what I have then to ſay proves ineffectual, I will be
" dumb for ever on it. On this you may depend,
" that I ſhall never have recourſe to violence; and if
" unable to convince you, that what I aſk is not a
" crime to grant, would not receive it on any terms,
" which, to reflect on hereafter, might give you diſ-
" content, or the leaſt ſhadow of remorſe. Believe
" me, that your peace of mind is of infinite more
" value to me than my own; and that if it can be
" preſerved by no other means, than relinquiſhing
" thoſe hopes to which our contract had given me a
" pretence, will make a ſacrifice of them, and confine
" myſelf hereafter to the bounds you ſet, however
" painful or fatal they may prove. You are the
" miſtreſs of my ſoul; all its faculties are at your de-
" votion, and to be directed by you; diſpoſe, there-
" fore, as you pleaſe, of

" Your ever faithful
" And moſt obedient ſlave,
" LORENZO."

Though the beginning of this letter gave me ſome uneaſineſs, the latter part of it entirely diſſipated it; and I reſted aſſured, that he would be indeed as conformable to my will as he had promiſed, and reſolved to give him a meeting as ſoon as I could contrive the means. I conſidered on what he had propoſed, and I found nothing in it but what was ſafe enough; but the tenderneſs the count had for me would not ſuffer it to ſucceed; for when I feigned an indiſpoſition, and deſired to ſleep in my own bed, that indulgent huſband would needs quit his alſo, and watch by me: but a ſmall time preſented me with an opportunity more ample than I could have hoped. Some diſturbance happening among the tenants on our land in the country, my father was obliged to go thither in perſon; he

he desired count Caprera to accompany him, believing his presence, who in the right of me was to be their future lord, might be of service on this occasion. He would not refuse my father, and thinking the journey might be too great a fatigue to me, being then great with child, they departed, and I was left at full liberty to do as I pleased. They had no sooner left the house, than I took pen and paper, and wrote to Lorenzo in these terms:

"THE long-wished moment is at last arrived; my "father and husband, those diligent observers of my "every action, are both removed; and before they can "return, I shall have many opportunities to perfect the "work I have begun. This night, about twelve, "the family will be all in bed, all but myself and "faithful maid, who will attend to admit you. Re-"member the conditions on which I grant this liberty, "and give me no cause, as you say, hereafter to re-"pent my condescension. Yours,

"ANZIANA.

"P. S. A gentle rap against the window-shutter "shall be the sign; take care that there are no pas-"sengers in the street when you make it. 'Till then, "farewell."

I dispatched my woman with this, with a haste and impatience which was not usual with me; and might, therefore, have served as an omen of its fatality, had I been capable of reflecting on it. She discharged her trust with her ordinary fidelity, and was returning to me with an answer, when my father and the count, having met with some company in the street, which had delayed their taking horse, were just passing by the house of Lorenzo, that ill-starred moment as she came out of it. The former of them knowing well who it was that dwelt there, and fired with a jealousy of the honour

honour of his family, catched hold of her, and bid her make no diſturbance, but go along with him. The terror and ſurprize ſhe was in would not ſuffer her to have preſence enough of mind to form any excuſe, if there had been a poſſibility of making one for ſuch a viſit; and a houſe being near, over the maſter of which my father had an influence, he thruſt her in: my huſband followed, but was too much overwhelmed with wonder to aſk the meaning of what he ſaw, 'till my father eaſed him of it, by calling the poor trembling wench all the opprobrious names his fury could invent; ſuch as the bawd of her miſtreſs's ſhame, and witneſs of her diſhonour; and not doubting but ſhe had ſome letter about her, ſearching for it, he immediately found one in her boſom, which contained enough to make him imagine himſelf confirmed in the truth of what he feared. I have had it too often repeated to be capable of forgetting it; the words were theſe:

"TO go about to inform you of the raptures with "which I received yours, would be as vain an endeavour "as it is to repreſent my impatience for that dear hour, "which is to put me in poſſeſſion of a bleſſing I have ſo "long languiſhed for. To think that I ſhall ſee An-"ziana again, and be permitted to converſe with her "as I have done when no curſt ties made her ano-"ther's right, is ſuch a profuſion, ſuch an extrava-"gance of delight, as is almoſt fatal to me; and I "have ſcarce breath to ſpeak my thanks. But our kind "confidante, who ſees my tranſports, will be better "able to make a deſcription of them, than all I can "ſay. Depend on every thing, thou ſovereign of my "ſoul! that you would wiſh to find in

"The moſt faithful, and moſt
"obſequious of mankind,
"LORENZO."

This

This did my father read aloud to the count; and by what I have told you of his paſſion for me, it is eaſy for you to gueſs into what an exceſs of jealous rage it muſt tranſport him. There was all the room in the world for him to believe I was carrying on an intrigue, the moſt diſhonourable that could be; he knew not the conditions on which I had conſented to admit him; and I cannot, without being guilty of partiality, but confeſs that there was a warmth in this letter, which had no affinity with platonic love. It is difficult to ſay, whether my father or huſband were now moſt incenſed againſt me, or which formed the moſt cruel ſtratagems of revenge on him by whom they imagined themſelves injured and affronted; but between them, there was one contrived, which I know not if any age can parallel, and I am ſure none can exceed: They ordered my woman to be faſt bound, and locked in an upper room; having firſt, with their drawn daggers at her throat, compelled her to write a billet to me, containing theſe lines:

"AN accident, ſuch as will take up more time "than I can now afford to relate, takes me from the "honour of your ſervice. It may be long before I "enjoy the happineſs of returning. I ſend this, there-"fore, to let you know, I delivered the letter you "entruſted me with, ſafe into the hands of Signior "Lorenzo, who cannot enjoy the bleſſing you would "beſtow on him; this night being, as he ſays, obliged "to attend the iſſue of an affair on which his life de-"pends. I wiſh you could be able to forget him "entirely, or think on him but as a man unworthy of "your favour. I am, with all reſpect and duty,

"Your Ladyſhip's

"moſt devoted and faithful ſervant,

"LAWRANA."

It

It was to no purpoſe that this poor creature atteſted my innocence, by all the aſſeverations ſhe was capable of making; it appeared evident to them, that if I had not already been guilty in fact, I intended to be ſo that night; and therefore leaving her in the houſe where they had firſt carried her, they went to the place where their attendants waited with the horſes; they ordered them to purſue their journey, telling them, they would overtake them the next day. This being done, they concealed themſelves in the ſkirts of the town where they were not known, till the approach of night; when, diſguiſed and muffled in their cloaks, they returned, and waited at the end of a back lane, through which they knew Lorenzo muſt be obliged to paſs; and as ſoon as they ſaw him, without giving him the leaſt warning of his fate, plunged both their daggers in his breaſt, on which he immediately fell: the place being extremely private, gave them no apprehenſions of any perſon coming along, and they tarried by the dead body, till ſome men, whom they had ordered at that hour, came and joined them, and carried it to the houſe of a ſurgeon, who had been brought up in the family of count Caprera, and was entirely at his devotion. Revenge not ſatiated even with the death of the ſuppoſed offender, this cruel huſband and father purſued it farther yet, denying the rites of burial to the lifeleſs bones, which they ordered to be clean ſcraped, and diſrobed of all their fleſh, and then ſet up in the manner you ſee. For that, oh Miramillia! continued ſhe, pointing to the anatomy, that dreadful ſpectacle was the once gay, admired Lorenzo.

Here the burſting grief broke in a ſecond time on her diſcourſe, and ſhe was compelled to give ſome time to it before ſhe could proceed; which at laſt ſhe did in theſe words:

Little was I capable of gueſſing what had happened, yet was I ſeized with a ſtrange diſorder at the receipt of Lawrana's billet; and when afterward I was told by ſome,

ſome, who little imagined how nearly I was intereſted in the news, that Lorenzo was abſconded none knew where, I was not without feeling ſome jealous pangs: it entered into my head, that my woman had ſubverted me in his eſteem; and the remonſtrances ſhe had daily given me, not to indulge too far the tenderneſs I had for him, confirmed me in that opinion. The girl was young, well bred, had a great deal of wit, and a more than ordinary ſhare of beauty; and to have them both miſſing at the ſame time, gave a kind of reaſon for this conjecture. The letter ſhe had wrote to me, took from me all ſuſpicion of the truth; and it never once came into my thoughts, that what had paſſed between us, had reached either my father or my huſband; but if it had, the letters which I received from them every poſt, would have diſpelled ſuch an imagination; both writing to me with a tenderneſs which I could not have expected from them, had I believed they had been ſenſible of my conduct. It was, it ſeems, the advice of count Caprera, that they ſhould diſſemble with me in this manner, till the time of my delivery, which now drew near, was arrived. At their return to Venice, nothing could I read in either of their countenances, which could give me cauſe to think they were diſpleaſed with me; and the indulgence they ſhewed me, with the ſuppoſed infidelity of Lorenzo, by degrees abating the paſſion I had for him, I grew perfectly tranquil and eaſy in my mind. Oh! had I never been undeceived, I had been happy; but the hour which was to make me a mother being come, how prodigiouſly was I alarmed, when I ſaw my huſband and my father enter the chamber, leading between them a prieſt, who had formerly been my confeſſor, but had of late been abſent on a foreign viſitation: the women being deſired to withdraw into another room, he began to talk to me of the duties of confeſſion, and the little hope there was of finding mercy at the eternal judgment-ſeat, for any perſon who left this world without having

having firſt received abſolution from thoſe whoſe buſineſs it was to give it; which, as he ſaid, could not be done without revealing all the remembered tranſgreſſions of our lives. You are now in a condition, continued he, which brings death ſo near you, that the eternal dart hangs over your head, waiting but the Almighty's word to ſtrike you to the center. Beware, then, that you have not yet ſome undiſcovered ſin which hangs upon your conſcience, nor let ſhame, or fear of what any mortal power can do, prevail on you to hide it. Speak, and be forgiven; or dying in ſilence, expect no mercy. He ſaid much more to the ſame purpoſe, I being too much diſordered, between pain and wonder, to reply; but when by repeated abjurations urged to ſpeak, I aſſured him, that I had nothing to reveal, but what I had already confeſſed to him, who was my ſpiritual director. But that is not ſufficient, cried my father ſternly; a vaſt eſtate depends on the heir you are about to bring into the world, and muſt not be the portion of a ſpurious race; anſwer with the ſame truth, as you muſt do at that dread Tribunal, where, perhaps, you may in a few moments appear, if it be to your huſband, count Caprera, that the production of this yet unborn is owing; and if no other man has ever prevailed on the weakneſs of your ſex, in prejudice of your honour and your vow. The ſurprize I had been in to what this viſit tended, now gave way to an adequate rage, when I found it was occaſioned by jealouſy. What! cried I, am I ſuſpected and taxed, in this cruel manner, of a crime my ſoul abhors? Ungrateful man! purſued I, turning to the count, ſince thou couldſt think me falſe, believe me ſtill ſo; nor can I do leſs than inflict the puniſhment of doubt for ſuch a wrong. So great was my fury at that time, that I believe, though my father proteſted the women ſhould not come in to my aſſiſtance till I had made a more poſitive anſwer to the queſtion propoſed to me, I ſhould rather have choſen death, than have given the ſatisfaction they required, if the intereſt

of

of my child, who they both ſwore ſhould be an outcaſt as ſoon as born, had not prevailed on me; and I at length gave my oath, that never had I yielded to the rites of love but with the count my huſband. This done, they left me, and the women were permitted to come in; but I was ſo diſordered with the late treatment I had received, that it very much increaſed the danger of my condition, and my life was deſpaired of by every body in the room. I was, however, at laſt delivered of the eldeſt of thoſe ſons you ſee here: but never mother leſs rejoiced in being ſo. Inſtead of the congratulations I expected from a father and a huſband, and thoſe obliging tenderneſſes for which women chearfully go through that dreadful moment, mine regarded me but with frowns, and ſullen diſcontent, civil to me but when other company was preſent. It is certain, that whatever people may pretend, grief, without the aſſiſtance of ſome other diſeaſe, will never kill; it may by degrees conſume the ſpirits, and decay the body, but not deſtroy it immediately, elſe had not I ſurvived the treatment I then endured; much leſs that which ſoon after was my lot. The count, who to that ſpirit of revenge, which is natural to the Italians in general, had a more than ordinary ſhare of it in his compoſition; and though he was now pretty well convinced I had not wronged him in fact, was certain in his own mind, that I had done ſo in intention, and that the other alſo had not been wanting, had it not been prevented by the death of Lorenzo; it was not in his power to inflict more on him. I muſt be the next, therefore, that felt the force of his indignation; and though the condition I had been in, had till now prevented him from letting it looſe upon me, now was the time to vent the long pent-up paſſion of his ſtruggling ſoul, and ſhew me, that all the love he had borne me, was not ſufficient to combat with the dictates of his more prevailing reſentment. I was ſcarce able to go out of my chamber, when he told me, he had a ſpectacle to preſent me with, which had formerly

afforded me much ſatisfaction: and taking me by the hand, led me to this cloſet, where he had ordered the bones of the unfortunate Lorenzo to be placed as they ſtill remain. Though I had no more than an indiſtinct gueſs at the dreadful truth; yet an object ſo aſtoniſhing, ſo ſhocking, had almoſt deprived me of my ſenſes, before I knew the cauſes I had for grief. But when he related the ſtory, and with a barbarous pleaſure dwelt on the cruel triumph he had gained, my ſpirits, weakened with pain and inward diſcontent, were grown too weak to ſuſtain a diſcovery ſo alarming; and I fell motionleſs at the feet of this vindictive huſband. He made uſe of his utmoſt endeavours, indeed, to recover me; but when he had, What exclamations did I not utter? What did I not ſay of upbraiding and reproachful? How did now all my former tenderneſs for Lorenzo return, and with what an extremity of deteſtation look upon his murderers! The names of father and huſband were too little to awe the preſent fury of my ſoul. A thouſand times I cried out to them to compleat their cruelty, and ſend me to my dear Lorenzo; nay, was but with the greateſt care and diligence prevented from giving myſelf that death which they denied me. The violence of my paſſion, I think, abated that of the count's, and he began to treat me with more mildneſs; and at laſt to endeavour, by all the ways he could invent, to alleviate my diſcontents; but I refuſed to liſten to any thing he ſaid: and one time, when he was more than ordinarily aſſiduous about me, I flung from him, and throwing myſelf on the floor, made a ſolemn vow, that ſince he had brought Lorenzo to me, though not in a condition to know, or reward my conſtancy, no day of my enſuing life ſhould paſs, without ſome part of it being ſpent with him. For many months did I refuſe either to ſleep or eat with the count, whom I never called by any other title, than that of murderer, ruffian, and baſe aſſaſſin; but paſſions, which rage with that violence mine did, are ſeldom of long continuance. The tenderneſs

derneſs he now reſumed for me, the penitence he now expreſt for what the impatience of his jealouſy had made him act, at length won me to forgive him, and endeavour to compoſe myſelf. It is now ten years ſince this affair happened, and time, as it decays all things, has deprived my griefs of their former poignancy. In compliance with my vow, however, I devote an hour every day to the memory of Lorenzo, in this receſs, which is the repoſitory of all that now remains of him. Lawrana was, ſome time after the diſcovery, releaſed of her confinement, and permitted to attend me as formerly: ſhe is very often my companion in this ſad employment, and we join the mournful accents of our ſighs for poor Lorenzo's fate. The decorum of the world, the love I bear my children, whoſe intereſt it is I ſhould live well with their father, oblige me to feign a forgetfulneſs, as much as poſſible, of what is paſt; and the real tenderneſs which I believe he now again feels for me, makes him omit nothing which may induce me to return it. Thus is the ſecret of our misfortune concealed from all who know us; you are the only perſon intruſted with it, and I depend wholly on your honour for the preſerving it.

Here ſhe ceaſed: and the other, after aſſuring her that ſhe never would reveal one ſyllable of what ſhe had ſaid, told her, ſhe was amazed how ſhe could wear a look of ſo much ſerenity, when it could not be but that her heart muſt be all confuſion and diſorder. Cuſtom, replied ſhe, renders all things eaſy; even diſſimulation, to which my nature was ever moſt averſe, by a long habitude I am now grown perfect in; beſides, it is no inconſiderable lightening to the weight of my afflictions, that I give a looſe to them in this cloſet. My mind, diſburthened of the preſſing anguiſh by the vent I give it in tears, and in complainings here, has ſomething of an unaffected chearfulneſs when I forſake this ſcene of horror. You ſee, therefore, Miramillia, that there are woes in the world, of a nature infinitely

ſuperior to thoſe you labour under, and yet are undiſcovered even by the moſt prying eyes.

They had ſome farther conſiderations on this head, after which the ſorrowful mother took her leave, being well convinced it was not from Anziana that ſhe could hope to retrieve her dear ſon. At her return to her own habitation, ſhe ſet herſelf to think whom ſhe ſhould next addreſs: and in a moment, running through the whole claſs of her aquaintance, ſhe bethought her of a lady, who had been married very young to a gentleman ſhe paſſionately loved, and was as much beloved by him; but his relations being incenſed at the match, had contrived by a ſtratagem to ſend him beyond ſea, to a place where he could neither write to her, nor receive any letters from her. They were ſeparated for many years; but the perſon who occaſioned it being called to anſwer in another world for the cruelty and injuſtice he had been guilty of in this, the bridegroom was at laſt returned to the longing arms of his faithful wife. The joy of ſuch a meeting, joined to an affluence of fortune, ſeemed to promiſe Miramillia what ſhe had been diſappointed of in Anziana; and as ſhe had been extremely intimate with her, and had comforted her in her afflictions, ſhe doubted not but ſhe would be as ready to receive her now in this happy reverſe of her fate: ſhe, therefore, made all imaginable haſte to her houſe to wiſh her joy, and to let her know the ſervice ſhe believed was in her power to render her.

She was not deceived in one part of her conjecture; Iſeria, for that was the name of the lady ſhe went to viſit, embraced her, and ſeemed infinitely obliged to her, that ſhe added to the number of thoſe who came to congratulate her on this fortunate turn in her affairs. Some time was taken up in diſcourſes on ordinary matters; but Miramillia, being full of the buſineſs which had brought her thither, entreated to ſpeak to her in private. On which, the other taking her by the hand,

led

led her into a fine garden, at the upper end of which was a grotto; which entering, as ſoon as they were ſeated, the ſorrowful mother began her ſtory, and repeating the words of the fortune-teller, begged ſhe would make a trial of his truth, by undertaking this little piece of work; for which, ſhe told her, ſhe could not doubt of her being qualified, ſince ſhe had, in her dear huſband, all that ſhe had ever wiſhed to be poſſeſſed of. She had no ſooner concluded theſe words, than the other gave ſo deep a ſigh, that the grieved Miramillia, before ſhe ſpoke, was more than half convinced her ſearch was not here to end. It is a fault, anſwered Iſeria, to wiſh with too much ardency, which Heaven ſometimes puniſhes with the utmoſt ſeverity. I cannot ſay, but that I have found more mercy, and that I cannot call myſelf unhappy, while I enjoy the ſociety of my dear Montrano, my ever loved, and ever loving huſband; yet is there not a perſon in the world leſs fit to be employed in the taſk you mention, than myſelf. But leſt you ſhould ſuſpect my friendſhip, I will give you a proof of it, which I intended none ever ſhould receive from me, that of revealing to you the truth of my affairs. After which, I ſhall leave yourſelf to judge, if by my hands the enchantment you deſire can poſſibly be wrought. The other, making no other reply to theſe words than a low bow, in token that ſhe would take it as a favour, ſhe began the narration ſhe had promiſed in this manner.

THE HISTORY OF MONTRANO AND ISERIA.

YOU know, ſaid ſhe, that the paſſion with which Montrano and myſelf were mutually inſpired, hurried us to a private marriage, without obtaining the

conſent of Poluſino, the uncle of Montrano, and from whom alone he had any dependance; his father having waſted the beſt part of the eſtate which was to deſcend to him on a courtezan, of whom he was ſo fond, that he quitted one of the beſt of wives in the world, and lived wholly with her. Poluſino, however, had a very plentiful fortune, and having no children of his own, he declared to every body, that the young Montrano ſhould be his heir: I, on the other hand, had but a ſmall dowry, and that too in hands whence I could not eaſily call it out; nothing, therefore, could be more unadviſed, than for two people in ſuch circumſtances to join in marriage: but love is deaf to reaſon; the ſum of our deſires being the enjoyment of each other, we looked on all the misfortunes which might ariſe from ſuch an union, as nothing worthy our regard: we took all imaginable care, however, to conceal what we had done from the knowledge of Poluſino; but our caution was ineffectual, he was informed of it immediately; and ſcarce two hours had we been in bed, before he broke into the houſe where we lay, with a great number of armed men; who forcing Montrano to riſe, tore him from my trembling arms, and bearing him away, left me in a ſwoon, which had like to have been fatal to me; for the people of the houſe, ſurpriſed at what had happened, came not into the chamber for a conſiderable time; but when they did, they found me on the floor, naked, cold, and in all appearance dead: they applied things proper for my recovery, however, in caſe there were any remains of life left in me, which, together with the natural ſtrength of my conſtitution, at laſt brought me to myſelf, contrary to the expectation of all about me. I will not prolong the time by a tedious repetition of the exclamations I made; you may believe they were exceſſive, and proportioned to the greatneſs of my misfortune. But how infinitely more wretched, even than what I feared, did I find myſelf, when the next morning, by break of day, I ſent in ſearch of him,

him, and heard, that the next moment to that in which he was raviſhed from my embraces, he was ſent on board a veſſel, which then lay ready to ſet ſail, and was bound to ſome part of the Indies; but which, I could not by any perſon be reſolved! The years of fruitleſs expectation, which I waſted in hope of his return, or hearing ſome news of him, are well known to you, who ſo generouſly viſited me in that diſtreſs, and omitted no tender office of friendſhip to alleviate my ſorrows. Seven times had the increaſing ſun cheared the glad huſbandman and bleſt the fields, while all was winter and the gloom of night in my ſad mind. Poluſino in this time died, bequeathing his whole fortune to Montrano, if ever he could be heard of; which clauſe gave a vaſt addition to my griefs, ſince till that time I had believed he had not been ignorant where it was he remained: I now doubted not but that he was dead; men are inconſtant, variable in their inclinations as the ever-changing wind, ſaid I to myſelf; but though, another object taking poſſeſſion of his heart, he might forget his ſuffering wife, the conſideration of his intereſt would not permit him to be remiſs in his duty to his uncle. No, no, would I cry out, he is not falſe! eternal truth and ever-grateful fondneſs have on earth no being but in his mind. But he is dead, he is dead! and it is a prophanation of his memory, to harbour even a thought to the diſadvantage of his honour or his love. I now looked on myſelf as a widow, wore the habit of one, and endured, perhaps, more real anguiſh in my heart, than the moſt truly diſconſolate one ever had the capacity of feeling or than the moſt artful one had diſſimulation enough to affect. Even time relieved not my affliction, my griefs ſeemed rather ſtrengthened by age; and the more I reflected on the merits of Montrano, the more I became inconſolable for his loſs. I believe you are not inſenſible, that every body believing, as I did, that he was dead, I had many who addreſſed me for marriage: ſome of their offers appeared too

advantageous to be refuſed, and I was daily preſſed by my friends to pitch on one of them; but all my notions of love were dead, when I thought Montrano ſo; and reſolving to devote my future days entirely to his memory, as a grief I thought moſt juſt, I made a ſolemn vow to continue as I was: but that not being effectual to eaſe me of their importunities, it was my deſign to retire to a monaſtery, and was ſettling my little affairs that I might do ſo, without having any incumbrance from the world upon me, when Montrano returned. I had a maid, who had lived with me from the time that dear youth had firſt made his addreſſes to me; and as I was ſitting one day reading in my cloſet, ſhe came running to me, with all the marks of the moſt ſtrong amazement written on her countenance. Two gentlemen, ſaid ſhe, with an accent which ſeemed to heſitate with terror, entreat to ſpeak with you; one muſt be my Lord Montrano, or his ghoſt: he has his eyes, his mouth, his very ſhape and air, only more thin and dejected. It is certain, that this poor girl verily believed ſhe had ſeen a ſpirit, for never did I behold a creature in ſuch diſorder; but I had no leiſure to think on the occaſion of it, when he entered the cloſet; gueſſing at the ſurprize I ſhould be in, and having not patience to wait till it ſhould permit me to come down Iſeria! my dear Iſeria! cried he, am I again ſo bleſt to ſee you? And with theſe words ſnatching me to his breaſt, prevented my falling on the floor, as I was ready to do, overcome with an exceſs of joy and wonder. This abſence of mind laſted, however, but for a moment, and I again awoke to ſenſe, to thought, and rapture. Impoſſible would it be, as well as impertinent, to repeat to you the welcomes I gave him, or the ſoftneſs of his reiterated endearments; there are a thouſand little incoherencies in the talk of lovers which delight beyond the expreſſion, yet will be ridiculous when reported afterwards. The accent, the manner, is infinitely more eloquent than the words;

and

and though love is frequently obliged to wit to make himſelf be known; yet wit more often is glad to have recourſe to the ſoft follies of love, to make himſelf rewarded. Our mutual tranſports would not permit me immediately to perceive there was a ſtrange gentleman in the room; but when I did, the confuſion I was in for having ſo long neglected him, made me bluſh extremely; and the more I aimed to apologize for it, the more I found myſelf at a loſs how to do it: but Montrano gueſſing at my thoughts, relieved me; and with an admirable addreſs excuſed me to his friend, who I ſoon perceived was a man of excellent good ſenſe and breeding; he made me, in his turn, a great many fine compliments, with which he artfully mingled ſome praiſes of Montrano. When Heaven, ſaid he, formed a pair compleat like Montrano and the beautiful Iſeria, it certainly intended them as happy as they are deſerving to be ſo. It is, therefore, enough to make us call Omnipotence in queſtion, and aſcribe too great a power to the infernal potentate, if any misfortune ſhould arrive which might deſtroy their peace. I ſhould have taken theſe words as mere galantry, and regarded them no farther, if I had not ſeen the face of Montrano covered with a ſcarlet bluſh, which was in a moment ſucceeded by a deadly paleneſs: and ſoon a riſing tide overwhelmed his down-caſt eyes, with difficulty reſtrained from forcing a paſſage hence, and guſhing out in tears. You may believe ſo ſtrange a change from all the ſymptoms of the exceſs of joy to thoſe of grief, which now I obſerved in him, filled me with the moſt ſhocking ſurprize; yet reſolving to conceal it as much as poſſible, The misfortunes which threatened us with laſting woe, replied I, are now, I hope, blown over, and all our days to come are harmony and peace. At leaſt, continued I, they muſt be ſo, if Montrano feels as ſincere a ſatisfaction in our re-union as Iſeria does. I fixed my eyes on his face intently, as I ſpoke theſe words, and found ſo much confuſion there, as made me certain

in my mind, ſomething extraordinary had happened, which I ſhould know too ſoon; but what, I could not be aſſured. A thouſand apprehenſions, all at once, came croſs my thoughts, which, though I was impatient to diſcover the truth of, I feared to aſk; the diſorder in my ſoul was too viſible in my countenance, for both Montrano and his friend not to perceive it; on which the former, aſſuming an air as much compoſed as poſſible, conſidering the various agitations with which he, doubtleſs, at that moment was poſſeſt, and turning to the ſtranger, My dear Alceſtus, ſaid he, Iſeria is yet ignorant of the reaſons which, till now, prevented me from letting her know ſhe had a living huſband: I entreat you will relate them to her, omitting no occurrence, which either you have been an eye-witneſs of, or have heard from my repetition. I will, in the mean time, indulge reflection in yonder gardens, and pay my thanks to the mighty Diſpoſer of all things, that I am permitted once more to ſee this treaſure of my ſoul; and that I find her in perfect health, and not forgetful of her ever faithful Montrano. He concluded theſe words with embracing me in ſo tender a manner, as entirely diſſipated all the imaginations I had lately conceived to the prejudice of his conſtancy: I entreated him to ſtay while his friend gave me the hiſtory of his adventures, or that he would let me know them from his own mouth; but he ſo earneſtly begged, I would allow him the liberty he deſired, that I at laſt forbore to preſs him contrary to his inclinations; and as ſoon as he had left the room, Alceſtus began to execute his commands in theſe terms.

A perſon, ſaid he, who was indebted to my father for a conſiderable ſum, having removed himſelf and his effects to Ceylon, one of the Aſiatic iſlands, I was obliged to go there; the governor of the fort being a particular friend of our family, we judged he would have intereſt enough with the Dutch factory there, to compel the villain to do us juſtice; I embarked in the ſame ſhip, on which Montrano, at the dead of night,

was

was forced on board; we began an intimacy there, which I hope will end not but with our lives. He related to me the hiſtory of his paſſion for you, his marriage, and that that was the reaſon of his being ſent to Ceylon, where one, who had been formerly a ſervant to his uncle, lived now in great repute; having had the good fortune to pleaſe the widow of a Dutch merchant, who made him her huſband, and put him in poſſeſſion of all her effects; which was very conſiderable. With this perſon, he told me, he was to tarry till commanded back by his uncle, which he expected would not be ſoon: he concluded his narration with thoſe praiſes of you, which your beauty merits, and a thouſand vows of an eternal fidelity. Though I was extremely troubled at his misfortune, a little motive of ſelf-intereſt made me pleaſed, that I had ſo agreeable a companion in my voyage, and the time I was to remain at Ceylon; but to alleviate his melancholy, I gave him my promiſe, and indeed ſpoke no more than I deſigned, that I would uſe the utmoſt of my endeavours at my return, and oblige my father to do the ſame, to prevail on his uncle to recal him: but Heaven was pleaſed to diſappoint the deſigns of us all. After having ſailed with a fair wind and proſperous gale, till we came within a few leagues of our intended port, a ſtorm aroſe, as violent as it was ſudden; we loſt all our maſts, the bolt-ſprit was ſplit in two; and after being toſt to and fro for ſeveral hours at the pleaſure of the waves, a great ſea came in, and drove us on a little iſland belonging to the Maldives, called Ekber, ſhort of Ceylon about ſeven leagues; it was with great difficulty we got on ſhore, all thoſe little ſpots of earth being encompaſſed with huge craggy rocks, and the ſavage inhabitants ſo unſkilful in every thing that can be called an art, that their harbours are little better than ſo many whirl-pools. With an infinite deal of toil and care, however, we at laſt got our long-boat in, which landing a few men at a time, returned for the reſt; but the captain, chief mate,

and five mariners, ſtaying till the laſt, a ſudden hurricane riſing in a moment, were all loſt by the veſſel's ſplitting, as was great part of the cargo; the reſt lodged on the rocks, whence they were afterwards brought away by the inhabitants of this barbarous place. We ſoon found, that though we had eſcaped the ſea, we were not free from dangers as formidable as that could threaten. We had no ſooner gained the ſhore, than we were deſcried by two or three of the natives, who ſending forth a loud cry, ran up farther into the country; and before we could well reſolve in what manner we ſhould behave among a people whom we eaſily perceived to be wholly uncivilized, we ſaw near a hundred of them coming towards us; ſome armed with great branches torn off the trees, ſome with axes, and a few with bows and arrows: we now repented that we had taken no care to bring our guns from on board, but on ſecond thoughts had reaſon to rejoice; for though we could have made a pretty good defence againſt this little troop, they would certainly have fallen on us in greater numbers, and, over-powered by them, at laſt been provoked to have given us worſe treatment; we therefore opened our arms, and preſented to them our naked breaſts, in token of ſubmiſſion; on which they ſeemed to receive us kindly; but drawing round us in a circle, conducted us, hallooing and ſhouting all the way they went, till we came to a place, which, as we found afterwards, was a kind of market, where ſlaves, ſuch as we were now become, were diſpoſed of to the beſt bidder.

In this iſland, and it ſeems in moſt of the others belonging to the Maldives, there is a ſort of Incas, or king, but all tributary, and acknowledging an obedience to one ſovereign of all, who reſides in Male, the chief of the iſlands, and ſtiles himſelf the emperor of thirteen provinces, and of a thouſand iſlands. He has a great number of ſlaves, and when he comes abroad, is worſhipped as a god. There was at this time a perſon in Ekber employed by him to buy ſlaves, and the market-

day

day happening to be the next day after we came, we were expoſed to ſale; myſelf, with two of our mariners, were choſen for this mighty ſovereign, but Montrano was the purchaſe of the Incas of Alſoore, who had ſent a meſſenger thither alſo on the ſame errand. The reaſon that the great market was generally kept at Ekber, was not only becauſe it was the largeſt of all the iſlands, but likewiſe that, lying at a more conſiderable diſtance from any of the others, than they did from one another, and more in the main ſea, there was a greater probability of unhappy perſons, diſtreſſed by weather, taking refuge there than in the others. I thought it a very great addition to my misfortunes, that I was to be ſeparated from Montrano; and I believe he ſpoke no more than the truth, when he afterwards aſſured me it was ſo to him. I will not trouble you with what befel myſelf in a five-years ſervitude among theſe barbarous wretches. The charms of Montrano gained him, for ſome time, a milder fate. He had been employed in the vile offices, for which he was bought not many days before, as he was working in the garden of the Incas, a piece of paper, folded like a letter, fell at his feet; he took it up, and found it directed, in the Italian language, 'To the accompliſhed ſlave;' and ſeeing no perſon near him, he concluded it muſt be thrown from ſome of the palace-windows. The oddneſs of the adventure at firſt gave him an infinite ſurprize; but curioſity, at length, getting the better of it, he unfolded the letter, in which he found a great jewel; rich, but ill ſet, according to the manner of ſo unpolite a country. But the value of this preſent was no ways conſiderable, when compared with the knowledge, that there was a perſon among theſe Pagans, with whom there was a probability he might converſe; caſting his eyes, therefore, haſtily over the letter, he found it contained theſe lines:

"SOME exclamations which I overheard youmake the
"other day, informed me that you are my country-man;
"your

" your air and mien demonſtrate you not to be of the
" inferior rank of men; I ſhould be glad to entertain
" you in a manner becoming your rank, but dare not
" make a public ſhow of the regard I have for you, leſt
" it ſhould be fatal to us both, but will ſoon contrive a
" way to leſſen the hardſhips you endure; in the mean
" time, deſire you will not fail to be in the grove of
" oranges, behind the banquetting-houſe, this night
" at twelve o'clock. Burn this billet, and take care to
" conceal the diamond which I incloſed in it, more to
" give it weight, than that I thought ſuch a trifle
" worthy the notice of a man I am reſolved to favour."

There was no name at the bottom; nor was it in his power to form any conjecture, to whom it was he was ſo much obliged: it is needleſs, therefore, to ſay he longed, with the utmoſt impatience, for the hour in which he hoped to have this riddle ſolved; you muſt believe, that in the circumſtance of being a ſlave among the moſt barbarous people in the world, condemned to offices with which he was no way acquainted, and for want of underſtanding the language in which he was commanded, little able to comprehend his maſter's meaning, was but by ſtripes made to diſcover their otherwiſe unintelligible directions; languiſhing his nights, painful his days; and what doubled the miſery of both, was the belief, that his ſervice was eternal; that the whole remainder of his life muſt be paſſed among thoſe wretched ſavages, for ever debarred from all ſocial converſation, his friends, his country, and his more dear Iſeria. You muſt, I ſay, believe, madam, that in ſuch a ſtate, it was no inconſiderable conſolation to think there was a perſon of his own country who pitied him, and ſeemed to have power to afford ſome mitigation of his misfortunes.

At laſt the expected moment came, he attended at the appointed place, and had not waited long before he ſaw, by the light of the moon, which at that time ſhone exceeding

exceeding bright, an old woman, whom he had often beheld at a diſtance in the palace, and knew to be an attendant on the wife of the Incas: he told me that he was ſo much ſurprized at the ſight of her, that he knew not how to receive her with that ceremony, which the ſtation ſhe was in ſeemed to require, as being the chief favourite of the greateſt woman in the iſland. She perceived the diſorder he was in; and approaching him with a ſmile, I am afraid, ſaid ſhe, in Italian, that the appearance of an old woman may have put a damp to thoſe glorious hopes the letter you received muſt certainly have inſpired you with; but I dare ſwear, you have too much underſtanding not to know, that our good genius does not always appear to us in the moſt pleaſing ſhape. However diſagreeable my form may ſeem, I bring you tidings which may excuſe my age and wrinkles. The wife of the Incas of Alſoore, as well as myſelf, is of your country, both born and bred up in Venice; but her inclinations being ſomewhat more gay than was conſiſtent with the cuſtoms of that republic, ſhe was ſent to Bruſſels, where ſhe had ſome relations, in order to be made a recluſe; I was ordered to attend her to that place; but in our way we happened to meet with a Dutch officer, who being captivated with the charms of Elphania, (for ſo was then my miſtreſs called) prevailed on her to accompany him to Holland: we lived with him ſome time; but the inconſtancy, natural to mankind, rendering her unhappy in the loſs of him, we were reduced to very great hardſhips, which compelled us to do ſomething contrary to the laws; we were ſent to Ceylon, to expiate, by an eternal ſlavery, a ſin, which nothing but neceſſity could have made us guilty of. Being expoſed to ſale in the market-place, ſome perſons belonging to this Incas bought us for his ſervice; but we had no ſooner arrived here, and were brought into his preſence, than he fell ſo paſſionately in love with Elphania, that from a ſlave he raiſed her to his bed and throne: with this condition only, that ſhe ſhould renounce the chriſtian

tian faith; which ſhe did, and is now the moſt favoured and beſt-beloved of any of his queens; though he has ſome of a birth equal to his own. This, continued ſhe, is the ſum of our hiſtory before your arrival; but ſince you appeared, my royal miſtreſs has been no more herſelf, all her days and nights have been taken up with contemplating in her mind the perfections of her lovely ſlave; but that paſſion, which the ſight of you inſpired, was extremely heightened, when happening to be in a cloſe bower in the garden the other day, unſeen by you, ſhe heard you lament your ill fortune, and cry out for death, in terms, ſhe ſaid, the moſt tender and moving that tongue ever uttered. She was, however, extremely pleaſed to find you were an Italian; and her thoughts, which had till then been divided, if ſhe ſhould make you acquainted with the tenderneſs ſhe had for you or not, were now wholly determined to do it the firſt opportunity. It is charity, ſaid ſhe to me; it is that natural inſtinct which prompts us to have a pity for thoſe of our own country, as well as love, which now obliges me to eaſe the ſufferings of this lovely ſlave; nor can I, will I, ought I to ſee him languiſh under miſeries to which I am certain he is a ſtranger, and cannot long ſupport. She had no ſooner formed this reſolution, than ſhe wrote the billet, and plucking a diamond off her breaſt, and folding it in it, that ſhe might be able to hurl it at a greater diſtance than the paper of itſelf might have fallen, we ſaw it light directly at your feet; at which we ſhut the window immediately, leſt, in the hurry of ſurprize and joy, you might have approached more near than was convenient, where there are ſo many ſpies and guards perpetually attending. This is the intelligence I bring you, ſir, purſued ſhe, which if you receive not with the extremeſt pleaſure, you are not only ungrateful, but alſo perverſe; blind to your own intereſt, and deſerving of the misfortunes you have already fallen under, and thoſe which may enſue from ſlighted love, and tenderneſs abuſed. Montrano aſſured me, in relating

relating this part of his ſtory, that he never in his whole life had been capable of feeling ſo much ſcorn and deteſtation as at that minute; the name of wife to the Incas could not inſpire him with ſuch reſpect, as to take off his contempt for that of a tranſported felon, in which circumſtance he found this queen had been brought to Ceylon; he had his heart already too much devoted to his beloved Iſeria, for any other charms to work the leaſt effect. Thoſe of this queen, though ſhe had been the greateſt beauty nature ever formed, would not have been able to have compenſated for the deformities of her mind. Scarce could he regard the old beldame, who came from her, with patience; he had, however, preſence enough of mind to reflect on the danger of diſobliging her; but never, ſaid he, did I go through a greater or more difficult taſk, than that of affecting a ſatisfaction at the news ſhe brought; he did it, notwithſtanding his reluctance, in ſuch a manner as paſſed for truth; and the amorous Elphania, not doubting, by what her confederate informed her, but that he was as ſuſceptible of her favours as ſhe wiſhed him, prevailed on her doating huſband to give her leave to retire to a little palace they had farther in the heart of the country: ſhe pretended that the air had been prejudicial to her health; and for the recovery of it, he willingly conſented ſhe ſhould be for a little time removed. She had the liberty of chuſing what ſlaves ſhe pleaſed to attend her, and Montrano, for whoſe ſake all this was done, was the firſt ſingled out; as for the reſt, they were either ſuch whoſe fidelity ſhe could depend on, or ſuch who had not capacities to fathom the meaning of any thing which was not directly told them. With this equipage ſhe took leave of the Incas, and being arrived at the place to which ſhe intended to go, the ſlaves were appointed each to their ſeveral employments; that of Montrano's was to overlook thoſe that kept the rooms in order, and ſee that they did their duty; an eaſy taſk as to the bodily exerciſe of it, but his mind was in agitations

tions more violent than ever; the humour of the miſtreſs he now ſerved, was more perplexing to him than the tyranny of his former maſters; nor had he leſs to expect from her revenge, when ſhe ſhould find how little he was diſpoſed to comply with her intentions, than from the moſt inhuman of his own ſex. She preſented herſelf to him, her natural beauties illuſtrated with all the aids and embelliſhments of art; ſhe talked to him in ſo free a manner, that had he not been apprized of her deſires by the diſcourſe of her confidante, yet he could not have been ignorant what they were by her behaviour; but thinking the ſafeſt, as well as moſt galant manner of denying, was, not to ſeem to know that any thing more was expected from him than ſubmiſſion and reſpect, he never approached her but with the ſame awe as that we enter the ſacred temples; but as this was not that ſort of adoration which ſhe expected from him, ſhe grew extremely peeviſh, and after ſhe had diſmiſſed him from her preſence, complained to her confidante of the little compliance ſhe found in him, on which the ſhameleſs procurer of her pleaſures took upon her to chide him ſeverely; but, while ſhe was doing ſo, a ſudden thought came into his head, which might gain him ſome time: he told her, that no man could be more ſenſible of the beauties of her miſtreſs, but that he was under a ſolemn vow not to know the joys of love for two whole years. More than one of them, ſaid he, is already elapſed; and as I have kept my promiſe inviolable till now, have cauſe to fear, that if I break it, ſome ſudden and unheard-of judgment will fall upon me. This monſter of her ſex endeavoured, partly by railing at his ſuperſtitious regard of oaths, as ſhe termed it, and partly by hinting, that no puniſhment could enſue the breach of it, equal to that which threatened him in loſing the favour of the queen to alter his determination; but neither perſuaſions nor menaces being of any uſe, ſhe was obliged to leave him as ſhe found him, and return to her miſtreſs with an account little pleaſing to her. What diſcourſe paſſed between

between them was unknown as to the ſubject of it; but he doubted not, by the gloom which ſat next day upon both their brows, that it had not been in his favour, and that he ſhould ſhortly experience all that a cruel and revengeful woman, reſtrained by no principles of honour, religion, or generoſity, could inflict; but, contrary to theſe ſuggeſtions, the intelligencer of the other's meaning told him, that in ſpite of the coldneſs with which he had received her queen's affections, and the diſregard he paid her, in preferring a fooliſh vow to her embraces, ſhe ſtill retained a tenderneſs for him, which would not ſuffer her to caſt him off, and had prevailed on her to wait the expiration of the time he mentioned, for a proof how worthy he was of the paſſion ſhe had entertained for him. Montrano, ſaid he, anſwered this meſſage in terms as obliging as he could; and from that time forward was put to no further trouble till the expiration of the year. They ſoon removed to the great palace, where the deceived Incas received this perjured woman with ſuch demonſtrations of kindneſs, that the knowledge of her ingratitude to ſuch a huſband, whoſe love had raiſed her from the loweſt ebb of fortune, and ſtill continued to ſupport her in all the pomp that that part of the world could afford, made her yet more hateful in his mind; he often told me, that he abhorred even to look upon her. But not to ſpin out my narration to a tedious length, the whole year of his freedom from her ſolicitations, he paſt in contrivances to get from that deteſted place; but found that impoſſible, ſince, had he made his eſcape to any of the other iſlands, as perhaps he might have done in a canoe, the Maldives have ſo good an intelligence with each other, that he muſt infallibly have been diſcovered, and ſent back to endure the moſt cruel puniſhments imaginable. You may think it ſtrange, perhaps, that neither he nor I could have any opportunity of ſending to Ceylon, where we both were known, and might early have been ranſomed; but the temper of thoſe wretches

wretches is ſo barbarous, that, beſides the uſe a chriſtian ſlave is to them, they take delight in triumphing over and detaining them; and having no correſpondence with any other nation in the world, they know not the value of their own commodities; and having every thing within themſelves, which they are capable of having any reliſh for, regard nothing which may be offered in exchange for their ſlaves: gold nor ſilver is of any eſtimation with them, their current coin being a white ſhell which is found upon the mountains, and which the Incas keeps a guard about, it being death by the law for any perſon, but thoſe appointed by him, to pick up any of it. For theſe reaſons they have, on the frontiers of the iſland next to Ceylon, a conſtant number of troops always maintained, who ſuffer no boat nor perſon to paſs either to or from that place, without a token from the Incas; for that being a place of trade, and having a factory in it of chriſtians, without this caution it would be impoſſible to keep thoſe people, who are ſo miſerable as to fall into their hands, from regaining their liberty. Montrano, therefore, having no way to fly from ſolicitations ſo diſpleaſing to him, to evade them, pretended ſickneſs: a few days before the expiration of the year, he counterfeited ſo well the moſt violent pains, that none who ſaw him but verily believed he languiſhed under them. One thing, indeed, was a great advantage to his feigning, which was, that there were no phyſicians in that place, their way of curing diſeaſes being to ſhoot arrows into many parts of the patient's body, believing phlebotomy a remedy for all diſorders. Montrano ſuffered this experiment to be tried on him, but afterward pretended to be much worſe than before. In fine, he carried on this deception for the ſpace of ſeven months, at the end of which time he had an unexpected relief; Elphania fell in reality as ſick as he pretended to be; her life was deſpaired of; and having before made an excuſe that the ſea air did not agree with her conſtitution, the Incas would needs have it, that her preſent diſorder

ſprung

ſprung from the ſame occaſion, and ordered her to be removed on a litter borne on ſix men's ſhoulders, thinking that the eaſieſt way of carriage. Montrano ſeeming not yet perfectly recovered, was diſpenſed with for not officiating in his employment, but obliged ſoon after to pretend a relapſe; for being, on the queen's being ſomewhat better, ſent for to come to the place where ſhe was, and thinking this would not be a laſting pretence, he feigned madneſs, and committed a thouſand irregularities, though none hurtful or miſchievous to any body: Elphania, as well as others, was deceived for a long time; but at length diſcovered the impoſition, by the ſame means ſhe had done he was an Italian: his misfortunes growing, by their continuance and little appearance or hope of relief, more heavy to be borne, he could not forbear giving them vent in tears and exclamations whenever he was alone: he was one day overheard by the confidante of Elphania's deſires, and the report that he was but ſeemingly mad immediately conveyed to her miſtreſs; on which ſhe reſolved no longer to be diſappointed in her love, or failing in that of her revenge, for the contempt thrown on her beauty. She again deſired leave of the Incas to retire into the country; which being eaſily obtained, among the number of ſlaves ſhe took with her, was Montrano---The antick poſtures of that poor lunatick, ſaid ſhe, may divert in the abſence of my dear lord. Nobody in the leaſt ſuſpecting her intentions, whatever ſhe did in thoſe affairs was unqueſtioned. It was now three full years Montrano had carried on his diſguiſe of madneſs, without any perſon in the world believing him otherwiſe; nor had he any thought that Elphania had diſcovered the deceit, till they arrived at the little palace which ſhe had made choice of for the ſcene of her pleaſures or revenge; but ſhe was no ſooner ſettled there, than ſending for him into her own apartment, where nobody but the old Venetian woman was preſent, ſhe began to queſtion him, for what reaſon he had im-

poſed

poſed on a queen who loved him. The knowledge that he was ſuſpected did not ſurprize him ſo far, but that he had preſence of mind enough to endeavour to wave it off, by replying in the ſame wild and incoherent manner, as he had done ſince he firſt affected to be frantick; but ſhe would not ſuffer him to go on for any long time; but telling him, ſhe was convinced of the impoſition he had ſo unworthily put on her, and that if he did not immediately confeſs the true motive which obliged him to it, he ſhould ſuffer the moſt cruel death ſhe could poſſibly invent. He pauſed a little on theſe words; not, as he ſaid, that he feared to die, but thought, that to die in this remote corner of the world, without the power of acquainting any perſon with his fate, was ſomething too terrible to be borne; and thinking, that as ſhe was ſo poſitive, no worſe could befal him in a declaration of the truth, than in a fruitleſs endeavour to conceal it; he threw himſelf upon his knees, acknowledged her beauties to be infinite, returned his moſt humble thanks for the condeſcenſions ſhe had made him; but withal confeſſed, that he was rendered wholly unable to return her affections, by having, before he ſaw her, devoted his whole ſoul to another object; and then proceeded to relate to her the hiſtory of his love for you, his marriage, and the cruelty of his uncle; who, ſeparating him from you, had occaſioned his falling into the condition of a ſlave. He told her, he relied entirely on her generoſity; and entreated, ſhe would look on him with the eyes of pity and forgiveneſs.

When Montrano related this part of his hiſtory to me, ſaid his friend, he told me, I muſt make uſe of my own imagination to conceive, what kind of fury it was that ſeized the ſoul of this moſt vile woman, and ſparkled in her eyes. You, madam, purſued he to me, if your ſoft ſoul can form an idea ſo horrible, muſt tell yourſelf what was not in his power, who ſaw it, to deſcribe, much leſs in mine.---What, cried ſhe, is it for another that I am deſpiſed? Is it for the idea of an abſent wo-

man

man the beauties of the preſent are contemned? The burſting rage prevented her from ſpeaking any farther to him at that time; but turning to the adviſing fiend, who ſtood near her, they had ſome diſcourſe together; after which, in a loud voice, It ſhall be ſo, ſaid ſhe; ſince he is no man for me, he ſhall not for another. With theſe words ſhe flew out of the room, leaving only the old wretch with him; who bidding him follow her, conducted him to a room at the farther end of the palace, where having locked him in, ſhe left him for ſome hours to meditate on what had happened; but towards evening, coming in again, Well, ſaid ſhe, have you conſidered of your late folly, in the manner you ought to do? Have you repented? And are you now reſolved to accept that happineſs the queen deſigns you?---I have already told her, anſwered he, that it is not in my power. ---But have you reflected, reſumed ſhe, that your life is wholly in her's? and that with a breath ſhe can diſpoſe your fate?---I have, ſaid he; and whatever miſeries Heaven may make her the inſtrument of inflicting on me, I muſt endure.---It is well, ungrateful wretch, cried ſhe, but ſhe has more of mercy than thou meriteſt from her: your life ſhe will not take; but as you ſlight the joys of love, when proffered you by her, ſhe will take effectual care you never ſhall taſte them with another. Montrano proteſted to me, that he could not gueſs what it was ſhe meant, till giving a ſtamp with her foot, ſix luſty ſlaves ruſhed in, and, in ſpite of his ſtruggling, bound his hands and feet with great cords: the beldame ſaw it done; and aſking him, once more, if he repented, to which he anſwered in the negative, ſhe went out of the room, and bade the fellows do their office: on which one of them plucked out a ſharp inſtrument, drew nearer to him, and by ſome actions diſcovered to the amazed priſoner his inhuman intent. For, madam, now, continued he, comes on the dreadful part of your unhappy huſband's fate. Huſband, did I ſay? Alas! he, from that cruel moment, had no more the power of being

being ſo; deprived for ever of the dear names of father and of huſband; robbed of his ſex, and doomed to an eternal ſterility.

In ſome time after this fatal event, Elphania, either repenting what ſhe had done, or that it were true, as ſhe ſaid, that ſhe had given orders only to threaten, not really to inflict ſuch a misfortune; to make what reparation was in her power, gave him his liberty, and a large ſum of money, that he might tranſport himſelf to Ceylon. In ſpite of the juſt hatred Montrano had conceived againſt her, the circumſtances he was in made him accept of her favours; and hiring a canoe, embarked in it for Candea, the chief city of Ceylon; but the weather changing, they were obliged to land him among the mountains, fifty miles ſhort of the port he deſired: the neceſſity, however, being unavoidable, he was forced to comply. He found ſome poor Dutch on the ſea-coaſt, one of whom he took with him as a guide; but they had not travelled many miles before they were met by a gang of robbers, with whom making ſome reſiſtance, he was dangerouſly wounded, after being deprived of all that had been given him by Elphania. The poor guide continued by him till ſome paſſengers coming by, he was taken up and carried to a houſe; where being taken ſome care of, and his wounds dreſſed, though after a very indifferent manner, the ſtrength of his conſtitution at laſt brought him to himſelf; but the only Chriſtians in that place being Dutch, a people who never were greatly famed for hoſpitality or charity, ſo little was contributed towards his ſupport, that the want of neceſſaries kept him weak much longer than the hurts he got by the thieves would elſe have done. In fine, he recovered, but had not ſtrength enough, for a long time, even to walk about his chamber, 'till that ſmall pittance, which had been allowed him, being taken away, and the appetites of nature craving ſupport, he crawled out into the ſtreet; an object, he ſaid, of ſo much pity, that he appeared more

more like a ghoſt than a living man. Having been ſo long kept from air, coming into it all at once, made him faint away, and he fell down at the door of a rich native of the iſle; as it happened, he had leſs of the ſavage in him than moſt of them, and could not ſee a creature of his own ſpecies in ſo lamentable a condition, without affording him ſome relief; he took him in, had him laid on a bed, applied proper things for his recovery, and gave him the beſt refreſhment he had in the houſe. Neither of them knew the language of the other; but the Ceyloneſe made him underſtand by ſigns, that if he would ſerve him, he would be kind to him; but Montrano, as well as he could, let him know he was a paſſenger, who had been deprived of all he had of value by the robbers; and that he was travelling to Candea, where he had friends who would ſupport him, but that he muſt beg his way thither. The other ſhaked his head at this information, in token that his countrymen had little charity to ſtrangers; but Montrano being determined, he gave him ſome ſmall matter toward his ſupport in the journey; with which, after having ſtayed three or four days to recover his ſtrength, he departed. But, alas! his long indiſpoſition and want had enfeebled his limbs in ſuch a manner, that he rather crept than walked; he moved on, however, in this ſlow pace for a whole week, half a mile a day being the moſt he could boaſt to have travelled; at the end of which time he unfortunately miſtook his way, and happened into a wild place, which they call the deſarts of Cayamas; there did he wander up and down, unable to extricate himſelf from that labyrinth of rocks, which lie thick ſcattered in that dreadful waſte; and muſt certainly have periſhed, had not Providence ſent him a relief by the moſt unexpected means. A gang of robbers having taken a rich booty, for which, in all probability, they were purſued, had taken ſhelter in this place, where it was almoſt impoſſible for any to overtake or find them. Thinking themſelves ſecure,

they had ſat down to reſt and divide the prize at the foot of a great heap of ſtones, which ſeemed as if they had been thrown up by ſome earthquake. When Montrano came on the other ſide, he heard their voices; and ſaid, he thought he never had heard a ſound ſo pleaſing as this was; which gave him intelligence, he ſhould once more ſee the faces of human creatures, and he hoped be guided from that uninhabited wild. The pile which parted them was vaſtly long, but not very high, and they happened to lie ſo on the ſide he was, that he might eaſily climb to the top of it; in ſpite of his weakneſs, therefore, he attempted it, and with ſuch ſucceſs, that in a few minutes he gained the ſummit; whence looking down, he ſaw five men ſitting pretty cloſe together, counting money, which lay in a heap on the ground before them; he was conſidering in what manner he ſhould get down the ridge of ſtones, being much more perpendicular on this ſide than the other, when one of the robbers, happening to caſt up his eyes, ſaw him; the wildneſs of the place, his pale and ghaſtly looks, the guilt of the gazer, every thing conſpired to terrify; and concluding him to be the ghoſt of ſome perſon he had murdered, gave a great ſhriek, and preſently fell down in a ſwoon; his companions believing him ſtruck with ſudden death, ſtarted from their ſeats, and had all of them, at the ſame time, a ſight of this affrighted object; every one took immediately to his heels, without any regard either of the booty for which they had ventured their lives, nor what became of him they left behind; and the natives of this country being extreme ſwift runners, they were out of ſight in a moment. Montrano gueſſed what occaſioned their terror, and cried out to them to ſtay; but fear had either made them deaf, or not underſtanding what he ſaid, they took it for ſomething contrary to what it was. In ſpite of the numberleſs miſeries of his preſent condition, he has often told me, he could not forbear ſmiling at their flight, and falling into ſome reflections: how inſepa-

rable,

rable, thought he, are cowardice and villainy! The place and circumſtance he was in, however, giving him little opportunity for indulging them, he deferred it until another time, and made what haſte he could to deſcend; which when he had done, he was in ſome debate within himſelf, if he ſhould take the money, ſo convenient for him in his neceſſity, and leave the wretch, who had aſſiſted in the unlawful gaining it, to recover as he could; or if he ſhould endeavour to bring him to himſelf, and by that act of charity engage him to be his guide out of the deſart; the latter of theſe ſuggeſtions took place, not only becauſe he had already experienced how difficult it was for him to find his way of himſelf, but alſo that it was agreeable to the ſweetneſs of his diſpoſition. Determined to do this, he kneeled down by him, rubbed his breaſt and temples, bent him forward, and did every thing in his power to reſtore him to his ſenſes; which when he had done, by ſigns and ſome few words which he had learned from the Ceyloneſe language, he made him at laſt convinced, that he was no more than a man, and had no deſign to hurt him. The fellow, thus re-aſſured, looked about for his companions, and finding they were gone, began to ſcramble up what they had left behind. Montrano aſſiſted him in gathering it, and by beſeeching poſtures, and ſuch expreſſions as he could make intelligible, entreated he would conduct him from that deſart, which the other promiſed to do; but by going round about, for fear his companions, when they had conſidered on the matter, ſhould return and claim their ſhare of the treaſure, they were two days before they gained the road, but rejoiced was Montrano once more to ſee it. At parting, the thief ſeeing the miſerable condition he was in, gave him ſomewhat to help him on his journey, and on he travelled till he came to a little town, called Javira; there I had the good fortune to renew my acquaintance with him, I having procured my liberty, by having ſerved the ſovereign of the Maldives in an exigence,

which, but for me, had coſt him his life. I was taking ſome refreſhment at a houſe of entertainment, ſuch a wretched one as that place affords, when I ſaw a perſon featured like Montrano, but in ſuch an abject and deplorable condition, and ſo altered in every thing from what he was, that I could not believe the firſt dictates of my mind, which told me, it was no other; yet reſolving to be convinced, I drew nearer to him, as he was aſking charity of the landlord of the houſe. He ſaw me not 'till then; but as ſoon as he did, Alceſtus! ſaid he. I will not go about, madam, continued this obliging friend, to repreſent the ſatisfaction I conceived at meeting with him; which would, indeed, have been as great a grief, had I not, at that time, been maſter of ſufficient courage to eaſe thoſe calamities which were viſible to me: the others which were not, and which, as ſoon as we were alone, he informed me of, gave me a concern equal to my ſurprize, that any thing, which had the ſhape of a woman, could act in ſo abhorred and ſhameleſs a manner as Elphania and her confidante had done; but as there was no relief for a misfortune ſuch as that, but patiently enduring it, I omitted nothing in my power which might conſole him. We made the beſt of our way toward Ceylon, which at laſt we reached; I had the good fortune to execute my father's commands on the villain who had endeavoured to impoſe upon him; and Montrano found the merchant to whom he had been ſent by his uncle, and received from him this pleaſing intelligence, that the old gentleman, repenting what he had done, had writ letters to recal him; and when the anſwers had let him know he had not yet arrived on that coaſt, had ſent others full of grief, and entreating he would make all imaginable ſearch for him. Neither of us, therefore, having any longer buſineſs at Ceylon, we reſolved to leave it the firſt opportunity, but were obliged to wait near two years before any ſhip ſet ſail for Europe; and

when

when after that time we embarked, it was in a Dutch merchant-man, bound for Rotterdam; there were we alſo compelled to ſtay a conſiderable time before any ſhip offered for Venice; but at length meeting with one, we came together without any farther difficulties, and landed laſt night; he has not yet paid his duty to his uncle, nor would ſuffer me to ſee my father, the tenderneſs he had for you calling him firſt here, where, he ſaid, I muſt alſo accompany him; not being able, he ſaid, to relate to you himſelf the misfortune which you now are acquainted with from my mouth.

Thus, ſaid Iſeria, did the generous Alceſtus end his melancholy narration; which having thanked him for, we went together to the garden, to ſee what was become of Montrano, whom we found lying in this very grove, in ſo ſad and melancholy a poſture as muſt have moved any one to pity, much more a wife, who loved him more than all things on this ſide Heaven; and whoſe affection was not in the leaſt abated by the knowledge of the injury that had been done him. I entreated him to riſe; but he refuſing to do ſo, ſaying, the earth, darkneſs, and ſolitude, were fit for ſuch a wretch as he was; I threw myſelf down by him, proteſting that I would never leave him; and that if he did not wiſh to ſee me the moſt unhappy woman in the world, he muſt throw off all thoughts, and, forgetful of paſt misfortunes, join me in thanks to the Almighty Diſpoſer of all bleſſings, that he was at laſt paſt over them, and ſafe in his Iſeria's arms, as he ſhould ever be in her heart. As I was ſpeaking in this manner, Oh thou moſt excellent of all thy ſex! interrupted he, think not I come to claim thee as a wife, to curſe thy youth and beauty with the ſhadow of a huſband: No; it would be a ſin Heaven could never pardon, ſhould I condemn thy charms to cold ſterility: thou, who may'ſt bleſs the world with a race of angels like thyſelf. No, my Iſeria! I came but to ſee thee once, then take my everlaſting leave, and in ſome diſtant cloyſter hide me for ever from thy ſight.---

Unkind Montrano, anſwered I, think you my love was ſenſual? Are you not as dear as ever? And would you leave me, leave me by your own choice? Have I not endured enough, when torn from me by an inhuman uncle? I waſted ſeven whole years in grief; but you muſt now inflict a ſecond wretchedneſs more dreadful than the firſt: that was unavoidable, but this free-will, and want of love to me, or want of mine to you. But do not think that I will ſuffer it; no, continued I, embracing him, thus will I cling about you ever, nor ſhall you throw me off; through lands and ſeas will I accompany you, and whereſoever you go, Iſeria will be there; I am your wife, your lawful wedded wife, and will maintain my claim againſt the united force of the whole world. Many more expreſſions, of the ſame nature with theſe, did I make uſe of, to convince him, that I regarded him with the ſame tenderneſs as ever, and thought no misfortune equal to that of being ſeparated from him; but could not prevail on him to alleviate his ſorrows for a conſiderable time. Never was there a ſcene more moving, more truly touching to the ſoul, nor never conflict more equally carried on by both; fondneſs with fondneſs warred, and love was oppoſed againſt love; mine at laſt, however, gained the victory, and he conſented to live with me in the manner you ſee; we paſs our days in a mutual endeavour to oblige each other, and our nights in ſuch endearments as a chaſte brother might allow himſelf with a ſiſter he tenderly loved. Our misfortune is entirely concealed from all the world but Alceſtus and yourſelf, on whoſe diſcretion I dare rely, elſe had not made you partaker of the ſecret. I believe no woman could be more tranquil, in ſuch a circumſtance, than myſelf; yet, Miramillia, loving as I do, and beloved with the ſame ardour, judge, if I can bring my wiſhes to that pitch of reſignation and content that is neceſſary to qualify me for the taſk you would have me undertake.

The

The afflicted mother ſighed at the little ſucceſs ſhe had hitherto met with, and having thanked Iſeria for the good opinion ſhe had of her ſecrecy, took her leave, and departed with a heavy heart. The next it came in her head to addreſs, on this ſcore, was a lady in whoſe fortune there was indeed the utmoſt appearance of ſerenity. She was married to a man ſhe long had loved, but had been prevented from being his wife by her parents, who looked on him as her inferior in point of wealth. She now ſeemed to be poſſeſſed of all ſhe had to wiſh, and was univerſally believed to be among the happy few. The manner in which ſhe received Miramillia, and the influence of every thing about her, with the tender affection ſhe obſerved between her and her huſband, made this afflicted mother conceive great hopes that her ſearch was here to end.

For which reaſon letting her know ſhe had ſomething to communicate, ſhe engaged her to retire with her into a room apart from the company, and there related to her the occaſion of her coming; at which the other appeared not leſs ſurprized than thoſe to whom ſhe had before addreſſed this ſuit; fain ſhe would have diſſuaded her from ſuffering herſelf to be impoſed on by the arts of thoſe fellows, who have no other livelihood than what they extract from the ignorant and credulous; but Miramillia, who ſtill continued reſolute on making the experiment, would not ſuffer her to proceed for any time on this theme; and Stenoclea, for ſo ſhe was called, had too much complaiſance to enter with her into an argument which ſhe perceived her friend determined to defend; with an air of pleaſantry therefore, which had in it, however, ſomewhat of diſſatisfaction, ſhe told her, that whatever reaſons ſhe might have to think herſelf unqualified for this employment, ſhe would undertake it; becauſe, ſaid ſhe, how little ſoever you may benefit by it, I am certain of receiving one very great advantage by it, which is the happineſs I ſhall enjoy in your ſociety, which of neceſſity you muſt afford me for

the time in which I am at work for you. Miramillia, extremely pleaſed at the grant of her requeſt, anſwered this compliment only with a ſmile and bow, and returned with her to the company, having obtained her promiſe of beginning the work the next day.

Three days had Miramillia paſt in this houſe, in which time both Stenoclea, and Armuthi her huſband, ſeemed to ſtudy nothing ſo much as to divert her melancholy; but all the feats and ſports their kindneſs invented, afforded but a ſmall portion of ſatisfaction, when compared with that ſhe conceived, at ſeeing this lady buſily employed in that taſk, which ſo many had refuſed to undertake, and from which ſhe had a greater hope than ſhe would make ſhow of, of obtaining her deſires, and once more embracing her beloved ſon. It was now more than half accompliſhed, when Armuthi being abroad, and the two ladies ſitting together converſing on ordinary affairs, a ſervant, with grief and confuſion viſible in his face, entreated to ſpeak in private to Stenoclea, who trembling, as if fearing ſome expected ill, bade him follow her into another room. Stenoclea returned not to Miramillia, till ſhe had heard a great noiſe below ſtairs, and a ſtrange confuſion of voices, which now gave this unſatisfied mother ſufficient cauſe to apprehend, that ſomething had fallen out which would render this lady alſo incapable of doing her the ſervice ſhe required. As ſhe was thus reflecting and lamenting the misfortunes of others as well as herſelf, Stenoclea, with ſtreaming eyes, and all the ſymptoms of grief, appeared: Oh! Miramillia, cried ſhe, it is now no longer in my power to impoſe on you: thoſe fears which made me ever incapable of doing you the ſervice you required, though I concealed them, in hopes to put an end to ſo fruitleſs an enquiry, are now come to paſs, and I muſt now be known to be the wretch I am; fain would I have deceived you into an opinion of my happineſs, by ſhewing you how ineffectual the performance of what you aſked would prove, to prevent you from

from being any longer deceived by the ſubtilty of that vain predictor, who adviſed you to this ſearch——but I am prevented in my deſign, and ſo far from that happineſs you wiſh to find, muſt own my breaſt a perfect chaos of wild confuſion, grief, deſpair, and ſhame.

It is hard to ſay, whether Miramillia was more ſurprized or troubled at ſo ſudden an alteration; but having made uſe of her utmoſt eloquence to perſuade her to a patient enduring of her fate, entreated ſhe would relate by what means ſhe was become unhappy; on which the other endeavouring to ſubdue her paſſions, replied, that ſhe had not thus long made a ſecret to her of her moſt private affairs, but with an intention to put her off giving credit to th: fortune-teller, and perplexing herſelf with a vain enquiry after what it was ſcarce probable ſhe would ever find, or if ſhe did, would be of no conſequence to her deſires in the end.

Long, ſaid ſhe, have I been wretched, through the fears of that misfortune which is now arrived; and when you addreſſed to me as to a happy perſon, my full eyes were ready in a flood of tears to convince you of your miſtake, and proclaim the ſituation of my heart; but friendſhip interpoſed, and told me, that by deceiving you this once, I ſhould preſerve you from continuing to be deceived, ſince in finding no effect from that piece of ſempſtry which you believed performed by hands proper to undertake it, you would no more have relied on that fabulous prediction, which I perceive has already given you ſo much fruitleſs toil. But my deſigns are now diſappointed, the cruel certainty of my fate leaves me no room for hope, or for concealment; you and the whole world muſt now be ſenſible, the ſun in his extenſive progreſs ſees not a wretch ſo loſt, ſo dead to comfort, as the undone Stenoclea.

The diſtraction of her thoughts here broke in, and for a conſiderable ſpace of time would not permit her to utter one coherent ſentence; but ſummoning the whole force of that reſolution ſhe was miſtreſs of, ſhe at length re-

covered herſelf enough to ſatisfy the high-raiſed curioſity of Miramillia; and being again deſired by her, prepared to give her the account ſhe was ſo impatient of, and ſeating herſelf by her, began in theſe or the like terms.

THE HISTORY OF STENOCLEA, AND THE SIGNIORS ARMUTHI AND BARNIBAR.

TO make you acquainted, ſaid ſhe, with the means which has brought the ſad cataſtrophe of my fate about, as alſo to let you a little into the nature and diſpoſitions of the perſons concerned in it, I muſt enlarge my ſtory, by going back into thoſe years which may properly enough be called my childiſh ones; many things happening at that time, though long ſince paſt, which have drawn on the miſery of the preſent.

Know then, dear Miramillia, that I was bred the darling of my doating parents, my only brother being many years elder, and then abroad on his travels; I was looked on as the comfort of their age, their marriage having never produced any other offspring than us two. I need not tell you how careful they were of my education; the little underſtanding I ſtill retain in poetry, mathematics, muſic, dancing, and thoſe other accompliſhments proper for a perſon of my ſex, will ſufficiently inform you; they deſired I ſhould be miſtreſs, in as high a degree as my capacity would permit, of every thing deſirable in a woman. The reputation of improvement, however, which thoſe who had the care of inſtructing me favoured me with, joined to a tolerable ſhare of beauty, gained me, before I reached the age of fourteen, a great number of viſitors, who pretended themſelves devoted to my charms; how much the generality

rality of them were ſo in reality, I gave myſelf not the trouble to examine, my whole wiſhes and deſires being centred in the agreeable Armuthi, a gentleman, whoſe maturity may inform you, was all that was love-inſpiring in his bloom; his age did not at that time exceed mine above five years, yet was there ſomething of a manly majeſty, which, mingled with the native ſweetneſs and innocence of his unexperienced youth, gave ſuch charms to his air, which I am unable to expreſs: but he was inferior in point of fortune; and that deficiency, in the eyes of my parents, (who partially imagined the merits of their daughter might entitle her to the greateſt expectations) over-balanced all his perfections. They could have given me a dowry which might have ſerved as a competence for both, and made his wants unfelt: not all the tenderneſs I regarded him with, though not unknown to them, could prevail on them to conſent, that I ſhould match with one whoſe only jointure was his love. In fine, they were now paſt all remembrance of what once they were, had loſt in age the ſoftening deſires of youth, and looked on grandeur as the only felicity in marriage. They were continually preaching to me the pleaſures of title and precedence; repreſenting to me the inſtability of thoſe deſires which perſonal perfections excite, and the numberleſs ills to which a woman is expoſed, who gives herſelf away merely for the ſake of love; they bid me reflect on the mutability of all paſſions, and eſpecially on that by which I was at preſent influenced; how wretched I ſhould be if Armuthi, after becoming my huſband, ſhould ſwerve from his love, or I repent that which had made me his; reminded me that the tie of marriage was irrevocable, and that if either of us deviated from our firſt flame, with what anxiety the chain would be dragged by both. But this was a doctrine in which I had no faith; I could not believe there was a poſſibility for love, like ours, ever to diminiſh; and as to any other miſchiefs, I ſet them at naught. A thouſand times [good Heaven! pardon

the wild exclamation] I have cried out, O let Armuthi be but mine, and I will defy the worſt that fate can do!

But I will not detain you with any particulars of the extravagance of my paſſion, which are not altogether material to my ſtory; it ſhall ſuffice to tell you, that I loved too well to liſten to the pretences of any other, though there were many who ſollicited my father on my account, and ſome of them very advantageous; but I was not to be moved by their deſpair, by the entreaties and commands of my parents, nor by any conſiderations of my own intereſt; and made no ſcruple of reſolutely declaring, that ſince I could not be the wife of Armuthi, I would be ſo of no man. This equally paſſionate lover would fain have perſuaded me to make my eſcape, and wholly neglecting all future contingencies fly with him to ſome place, where unknown we might obtain the means of being made one, and conſummate our loves; nay, once had he, for a handſome bribe, prevailed on a prieſt to join our hands without the knowledge of my obdurate parents; but neither to the one nor the other would I give conſent; not that I denied through any fears of what might happen to myſelf for ſuch an act of diſobedience, but that I could not bear the thoughts of involving him in the misfortunes which muſt inevitably fall on me. I loved him with too much real tenderneſs to conſent he ſhould be unhappy with me; and even wiſhed he loved me leſs, ſince I found he could not be ſo without me.

In ſpite of the diligence with which I was obſerved, I made uſe of ſtratagems which frequently gave us the bleſſing of meeting, if that can be called ſo, which was indeed no other than an opportunity of condoling each other, and lamenting our mutual woes. My mother's death, which happened in this time, rid me of one very watchful ſpy; and though I regarded her with a dutiful reſpect and love, yet it was ſo inferior to that I bore Armuthi, that the joy I took in finding myſelf more at liberty to ſee him, took away great part of

that

that ſorrow I ſhould elſe have felt for the loſs of ſo near and dear a relation. My father, who had, perhaps, more tenderneſs for her than he was ſenſible of himſelf, ſurvived her not more than half a year, but died with the ſame reſolution that he had lived, to prevent my marriage with Armuthi; and that he might the more certainly do ſo, he left my fortune dependent on my brother, and to be forfeited to him if ever I became the wife of that preſent gentleman; and leſt my tears ſhould work on his yielding nature to conſent to it, the eſtate was to deſcend to him, to be the portion of another; both of us to be cut off from his name and title, and as we obeyed this injunction to be bleſſed or curſed. Severe decree of a dying parent! yet ſuch was the averſion he had conceived for this match, that he would omit nothing which he thought might be a means to hinder it. All the hopes I had on the known ſweetneſs of my brother's diſpoſition were now vaniſhed, ſince he could not conſent I ſhould be the bride of Armuthi, without incurring the curſe of our father; nor had the power to preſerve me from beggary, without being made a beggar himſelf. I thought my condition now more deſperate than ever; I had indeed no longer obſtacles to keep me from converſing with this idol of my ſoul, as often or as freely as I pleaſed; but to what end did I ſee or converſe with him, but to become more unhappy by the daily diſcovery of ſome new charm, and the reflection that I muſt never be more his than now I was? I had but one faint ſhadow of comfort, and that was, that at my brother's return, which was now expected every hour, I ſhould perſuade him to mitigate the ſentence of my father's teſtament; and though he could not ſuffer me to receive my dowry, might evade the penalty of paying it, by allowing me the intereſt of it per annum, under the denomination of charity. This I ſometimes flattered myſelf I ſhould perſuade him to do, and it was this alone which the unhappy Armuthi and myſelf had to preſerve us from deſpair; for he, alas!

alas! had no probable view of maintaining the charges of a family, his whole dependance being on the favour of an uncle, who, though he very much encouraged his addreſſes to me, while there was the leaſt hope of prevailing on my father to conſent to the marriage, was now as much averſe, ſince he had heard the cruel conditions of his will; and often chid Armuthi for continuing his viſits to me. I had not ſeen him for two days, when, to my inexpreſſible ſurprize and grief, I received this letter from him.

Here Stenoclea opened her cabinet, and taking out a paper, read to Miramillia the following lines:

" MY tongue has for ſome time been endeavouring " in vain to tell you, oh my for ever loved Stenoclea! " what now I force my pen to do. Oh! with what " words ſhall I expreſs what it is I mean? Can I live, " and ſay that I no more muſt ſee you; no more muſt " liſten to the enchanting harmony of your heavenly " voice; no more muſt hear you own a tenderneſs, " which to be bleſſed with, there is not a ſaint but might " forego his heaven, and ſtand excuſed for change of " rapture? To what a hell am I accurſed that muſt " endure all this? nay, like Bellerophon, muſt my " own ſentence bear. Yet will I not complain, nor " utter one ſyllable to expreſs the anguiſh of my ſoul, " or excite an unavailing pity in yours. Fate, who " ordains me to this miſery, will ſoon, I hope, be " kindly cruel, and make it too violent to be laſting, " and ſtrike me dead at once. For oh, Stenoclea! I " have reſolved to go for ever from you; to carry from " your ſight a wretch, whoſe contagious woes drive " peace and happineſs from their loved manſion---your " gentle breaſt. Never, never will I renew thoſe vain " deſires of unaccompliſhed love, nor perſecute you " with a fruitleſs ſuit. Far from your ſight will I con- " ceal for ever this ill-fated form, too much beloved, " ſince too little worthy of being loved; and leave you

" to

" to regain that peace which I have too long deſtroyed.
" Guilty, as miſerable, ſhould I be to wiſh, much leſs to
" attempt, the obſcuring of ſo bright a ſtar; and in-
" volving in the gloom of mine, a life which has ſo many
" opportunities of ſhining with the utmoſt ſplendor.
" Oh! may no thought of me overcloud your future
" joys, but an eternal round of bleſſings crown each
" enſuing day! Farewell! believe, that in forſaking
" you, I now do more to prove my love, than had I
" ſpent the beſt part of my blood in fighting with ſome
" happier rival; nay, even in dying for you: that had
" been a glorious end; but this I now go to ſeek a mean,
" lingering, and painful one. Pity me; oh! to the
" laſt moment of my life, adored and loved Stonoclea!
" for I would ſtill be pitied, though not loved. Hea-
" ven! that I ſhould wiſh Stenoclea not to love me!
" What is there but that dear comfort to withhold me
" from running madly into ſome deſperate action, and
" breaking through all laws both human and divine?
" Yet, till you ceaſe to afford it, peace muſt be a
" ſtranger to your breaſt. Forget me then, baniſh me
" your thoughts; but wiſh me not to live: in mercy
" pray for the ſpeedy death of

" The deſpairing,
" The diſtracted,
" Yet adoring
" ARMUTHI.

" P. S. What I have reſolved, not even your
" commands ſhall prevent me from executing; this
" therefore comes expecting no reply, and before you
" can have formed one, I ſhall be paſt the reach of it.
" Adieu, once more, too lovely, and too good for my
" repoſe or your own!"

I cannot expreſs the grief I was in at the receipt of this letter; I was nearly touched with the generoſity of his behaviour, and joined with him in the opinion, that ſince

ſince there was ſcarce a poſſibility of our being at peace, and indeed the reputation of both demanded our ſeparation, yet could I not conſent to it; I found my ſoul too weak to reſolve againſt what gave me ſo much pleaſure as his ſociety, even though it were only a partnerſhip in misfortunes. I ſent immediately to his lodgings, charging the meſſenger to tell him, I muſt ſpeak with him before he went. But my commands arrived too late, and I was ſoon after informed, by one who was intimate with his uncle, that he was gone to travel, but to what part of the world was kept a ſecret. His only deſign, as he has ſince told me, being to ſeek a cure for his hopeleſs paſſion, he thought it would be an ill recipe to feed the diſtemper by letters or meſſages from the beloved object. This relation of his alone knew where he went; and having ſo great a deſire to prevent his nephew's throwing himſelf away, as he called it, on a woman, who if ſhe married him muſt have no fortune, there was little probability he would reveal it. Inconſolable was I for his departure, ſometimes believing his proceeding had been occaſioned by an exceſs of love, and regard for my repoſe; at others, that it was owing to the want of it; and whenever this laſt reflection came acroſs my thoughts, it gave me pains too terrible for deſcription.

Soon after this I received letters from Barnibar, ſo my brother was called, dated from Padua, which brought me word, he was on his return, and would ſpeedily be in Venice: never was there a more tender affection than that with which we had regarded each other before he went to travel; and as I had not abated any part of that which I had felt for him, ſo I ſuſpected not that abſence had diminiſhed his for me, and promiſed myſelf in his ſociety a real conſolation for the loſs of Armuthi: but, O God! when I expected to embrace him, and every moment thought the next would bring him to my arms, I received an account of his death, that he was killed by a gentleman on the road with whom he unfortunately happened to quar-

rel; and a ſervant he had with him endeavouring to revenge his maſter's death, was alſo left for dead; that the perſon by whom this misfortune had happened was unknown, and had made his eſcape, ſo that all hope of doing juſtice to his manes was extinguiſhed.

Judge what a ſurprize this muſt be to a ſiſter that ſo tenderly loved him; I found no comfort in the vaſt fortune which by his death I became miſtreſs of, and looked on myſelf as the moſt forlorn creature in the world. O, Armuthi! would I cry, thou haſt abandoned me, and Heaven knows where thy deſpair will carry thee---And Barnibar! thou who alone, by thy advice and tender friendſhip, couldſt have brought peace to my afflicted ſoul, art torn from me by ſome inhuman hand---O! bring the murderer to light, good Heaven! purſued I, that I may proſecute him with the ſevereſt vengeance---let him be taken, let him be detected when he leaſt fears the danger, and ſudden ruin overwhelm him, as that he brought on Barnibar, my unhappy brother!

But I will not, continued ſhe, weeping afreſh at this part of her ſtory, prolong the ſad cataſtrophe of my fate, by repeating to you the exclamations I made, or the thouſand vows I offered up to Heaven, and every ſaint, for bringing forth this unknown deſtroyer of my brother's life. I had ſcarce celebrated the ſolemnity of his funeral, before I heard Armuthi was brought back to Venice, being ſeized on the road with ſo violent an indiſpoſition, that he was unable to purſue his journey, and had taken the firſt opportunity of a litter for his return. It was reported he was at the point of death, and entreated to ſee me. Sure never any heart was ſubjected to ſuch viciſſitudes of anguiſh, as was mine, to have him reſtored; but reſtored in ſuch a manner as muſt deprive me of him for ever, was infinitely more dreadful than all I had before endured. I now perceived that he was ſtill more dear than Barnibar had been, and that all the ties of blood are far inferior to thoſe of love:---In ſpite of the diſguſt I had conceived againſt

againſt his uncle, I flew to his houſe, and regardleſs of the cenſure of the world, omitted nothing which I thought might contribute to the recovery of this ſoul-ſick lover, for well I ſaw grief was his only diſtemper. My kindneſs was ſo great a cordial, that, contrary to the judgment of the phyſicians, who ſome hours before I came had ſaid he could not live, I left him very much reſtored, and in ſo fair a way of recovery, that it amazed all about him. His uncle, now as obliging to me as he had formerly been the reverſe, gave my generoſity and conſtancy ſuch praiſes, as whoever had heard might have believed; he alſo was my lover: but I took little notice of them, well knowing that to have a great fortune, independent by the death of my brother, was the greateſt charm I had for him. Early the next morning did I viſit my dear patient again, and found him in a condition, ſuch as gave me great hopes I ſhould complete the cure I had ſo fortunately begun; in fine, I left him not till it was fulfilled, and having now no obſtacle to prevent his being my huſband, was married to him in a ſhort time after, to the great ſatisfaction of his now obliging uncle.

Nothing ever was more ardent, or more tender than the affections of Armuthi; all his actions, all his words, were ſo many demonſtrations of his ſincerity; and as I had given him the utmoſt proofs of mine, he could not but think his lot extremely fortunate; yet in the midſt of all the joy he expreſſed at my being his, I every now and then obſerved ſome ſtarts of anguiſh breaking out, and giving a check to rapture; deep groans, and ſighs too heavy for reſtraint, would ever and anon burſt from his troubled breaſt, even when ſurrounded with his moſt gay companions; nor could the chearful glaſs, when ſwiftly paſſing round in jocund healths, repel their force, though oft I have ſeen, and wondering ſeen him, ſtruggle with the innate diſturbance; but in unguarded ſleep, with what dire furies ſeemed his brain poſſeſſed! It is falſe, he would cry, wildly ſtarting up, I killed him not; and then, again, throwing himſelf

on

on the floor in ſtrange convulſions, Hide, hide me, roared he out, from the offended ghoſt! Stop, ſtop that ſtream of blood! it will ſwallow me! See! I am encompaſſed with a liquid fire! all hell is on me! Awaked and frighted with ſuch dreadful ſounds, I have perforce broken the chain of ſleep, and taken him to my arms; but, oh! what tremblings had the dire viſions left on all his frame! in vain, with every art of fond, endearing love, did I endeavour to bring him back to peace; too well I ſaw tranquillity was baniſhed from his breaſt, and he but wore a ſhow of ſoft contentment. As nothing ought to be a ſecret between perſons whom love and law had united in the ſacred tie of marriage, I preſſed him, with all the tenderneſs I was capable of expreſſing, to reveal to me the cauſe of his affliction; but never could I obtain from him this proof of what he had ſo often ſworn, to deny me nothing I could aſk, and in his power to grant; but, on the contrary, he told me that he had in reality no cauſe for grief, that thoſe troubled viſions were a diſorder hereditary to his family, and that it was madneſs to impute the wild ideas of fancy, in which reaſon had no part, to any real diſorder in the waking mind, which he aſſured me was entirely free from remorſe, or guilt of any ſecret ſin, which ſhould occaſion ſuch confuſion, as he was ſenſible ſometimes appeared in him. I cannot ſay I was perfectly ſatisfied with this reply; but having frequently ſpoke to him on this head, and finding him ſtill the ſame, and at laſt to grow a little uneaſy, that I expreſſed a diffidence in what he ſaid, I was obliged to give over any farther interrogatories concerning the affair: his diſorders, however, encreaſing, eſpecially in ſleep, gave me alſo perturbations which were very terrible to ſuſtain: he ſo frequently crying out on blood, made me indeed think ſome had been ſhed by unwarrantable means; and more than once it ſtruck into my mind, how dreadful a ruin we muſt be involved in, if by any accident he and my brother ſhould have met, and it ſhould be the

the ghoſt of that unhappy youth, whom he ſo often named; and the bare apprehenſions that ſuch a thing was poſſible, gave me horrors which I am not able to expreſs; but I endeavoured to baniſh ſuch thoughts as much as poſſible, and whenever any thing happened to renew them, ſtrove with all my might to overcome them by arguments of a contrary nature; yet would they not wholly forſake me, and the condition I was in was far from happy.

About five months ſince our marriage, did I live without any certainty, that there was ſomething in the bottom of all this, more than what I have told you. Oh! would to God I never had been convinced! Suſpence, tormenting as it was, was yet inferior to what enſued the dreadful detection of Armuthi's crime, and my irremediable misfortune; but murder though for a time concealed, will, ſometime or other, break forth, and blood will call for blood. I was ſitting this morning in a low parlour, when I obſerved a man who ſeemed to be enquiring for ſome perſon in the neighbourhood; I imagined I had ſeen the face, and looked more earneſtly, when preſently I ſaw him come to our gate, and on his near approach knew him to be Stilicon, an old ſervant in our family, who had attended my brother in his travels, and the ſame who was reported to have been murdered with him at Padua: I was infinitely pleaſed to find him alive, hoping by him I might diſcover who was the deſtroyer of my dear brother, and take that vengeance which his death required: I ordered he ſhould be admitted immediately, and as ſoon as he was, began to queſtion him concerning the manner of that unhappy accident; to which he replied in theſe terms:

We had not, madam, ſaid he, left Padua more than half an hour, before we met a gentleman well mounted, but unattended; either through deſign or chance, he rode ſo near my maſter, that their horſes joſtled, and the ſtranger's horſe being ſomewhat fiery, gave a ſudden ſpring, which was very near throwing his rider; he

he taxed Signior Barnibar with incivility, imputing the cauſe to him, as not having taken care to guide his beaſt, or turn him out of the way. My maſter not thinking he owed that reſpect to a perſon unknown to him, and whoſe appearance ſeemed not to command ſuch a deference, anſwered him in terms befitting the arrogance of the demand; on which the other, who, I believe, was heated with wine, challenged him to the proof, which of them merited to be eſteemed the braveſt man: my maſter, unwilling to decline the combat, leaped in a moment from his horſe, commanding me to take care of him, and, drawing his ſword, ran to meet his antagoniſt, who was already prepared, and, at the firſt puſh, received a wound under his left breaſt of which he immediately expired; I, diſtracted at what I ſaw, flew to the ſword of my dear dead maſter, reſolute to revenge him, or periſh with him: I confeſs myſelf too weak to do the former, but was pretty near obtaining my deſire in the other; for the murderous weapon which had deprived him of life was buried in my body, and but with difficulty drawn thence by its remorſeleſs maſter, who, leaving me weltering in my blood, to all appearance dead, made the beſt of his way toward the city. Some paſſengers ſoon after coming that way, the body of Signior Barnibar was conveyed back to Padua, whence you know it was afterwards conveyed to Venice, to be interred with his noble anceſtors: I was put under the care of an able ſurgeon, who, contrary to all expectations, worked a cure on me; but I continued ſo weak, that I was unable to begin my journey till three days ſince. Heaven has, however, enabled me to return at a ſeaſon to revenge the untimely death of my dear maſter. Early this morning, as I was coming to enquire where I might pay my dutiful reſpects to you, I ſaw the barbarous aſſaſſin, the idea of whoſe face, ſince that curſed moment in which I firſt beheld him, has never been abſent from my mind. I followed, unnoticed, and no doubt forgotten

forgotten by him, till I ſaw him enter a magnificent houſe a few ſtreets off; whence running immediately to a magiſtrate, I made oath of what I knew, and had proper officers, and a warrant granted to apprehend him. He is now under a ſtrong guard, and I can ſalute you, madam, continued he, with the joyful news that your brother's ghoſt will ſhortly have the vengeance it requires.

So ſtrongly, ſaid Stenoclea, did the fears I have already acquainted you with work in me, that for ſome moments I was incapable of aſking Stilicon the name of him whom he had apprehended; but when I did, he anſwered me, that he was ignorant either of the name or quality of the perſon, but that having cauſed him to be ſeized, he preſently enquired where he might find me, being willing to be the firſt who ſhould acquaint me with the pleaſing tidings.

Never was ſuch a mixture of hope and terror as that I endured all the time he was ſpeaking; I could not think it Armuthi, yet would have given almoſt my life to have been certain it was not. About this time I heard you coming down ſtairs, I ordered the fellow to be entertained by the ſervants, and came into the room to you; I concealed my diſorder as well as I was able, and indeed the more I conſidered the matter, the more I found comfort; I could not think, if it were really my huſband who was in cuſtody, but that I ſhould have heard of his misfortune from himſelf; I reſolved, however, to be informed of the truth, by ſending a perſon to the priſon; but before I had well determined in what manner to proceed, I was called to one who brought me a letter, the character of which, on the ſuperſcription, I knew to be that of Armuthi, and gueſſed the fatal purport before I read it in theſe lines.

As ſhe ſpoke theſe words, ſhe took out of her pocket a letter, which ſhe put into the hands of Miramillia to read, while ſhe indulged the greatneſs of her ſorrows in

tears, now again paſt the power of utterance by ſpeech: her ſympathizing friend conſidering, to repeat the contents of that paper would ſerve but to encreaſe her griefs, read to herſelf as follows:

" I Need not now be demanded the reaſons of " that deſpair you have ſo often obſerved, and which " were indeed too juſtly viſible for you not to perceive, " yet Heaven will, I hope, forgive a crime which was " involuntary.---Oh! that you would as readily be " brought not to hate the man, whoſe death will ſoon " atone the murder of Barnibar! But that were too " vain a hope: by one raſh act I have deprived you of " a brother, who was extremely dear to you, and of a " huſband who valued nothing in competition with you " ---What can I ſay in vindication of what I have done, " which will not ſeem rather to add to the heinouſneſs " of it? Yet had I loved you to a leſs violent degree, I " had not thus been criminal; the grief I conceived for " having taken the life of an innocent gentleman, and " the brother of Stenoclea, ſhould have made me, the " next moment I knew to whom my ſword had been " ſo fatal, reſign myſelf to juſtice; and, ſelf-accuſed, " teſtified how little my heart was capable of taking " the part of murder, though acted by my own hand: " but, oh! I muſt then have gone to the grave un- " bleſſed with your poſſeſſion---it was not life, but the " enjoyment of Stenoclea, that made me ſcreen the " murderer of your brother from the juſt cenſure of the " law; yet, oh! I confeſs it was a ſelf-intereſted flame, " and you ought never to forgive the man, who, to " feaſt on your charms, involved you in his deſtruction. " Horrid guilt! I tremble to think how much I have " wronged you; pity me, it is all I aſk; as for a mi- " tigation of my firſt crime, the killing of your brother, " it is what I neither hope, nor will endeavour; the " law requires my blood, and I will yield it a willing " ſacrifice; be you no more ſevere, nor hate, after

" death,

" death, him who only wiſhed to live for you, and
" never can be other than

" Your moſt paſſionately
" affectionate, though unhappy,
" and too guilty huſband,
" ARMUTHI.

" P. S. I dare not entreat to ſee you, in the circum-
" ſtances under which I am; yet hope you will not re-
" fuſe that comfort to my lateſt moments, which ſhall
" be all employed in imploring bleſſings on you. Once
" more pardon and pity the wretch, who was your
" faithful huſband!"

Now tell me, Miramillia, reſumed Stenoclea, gentle lady, adviſe me what to do, if a condition ſo truly deſperate as mine can admit of any which may afford the leaſt ſhadow of a comfort. The moment I had read theſe heart-wounding lines, officers came into my houſe, are now in poſſeſſion as of the goods of a delinquent, and ſhortly will the loſt Armuthi be made an example of public juſtice, and I, his wife, be driven out to ills, the leaſt of which is beggary.

Few people had more the art of perſuaſion, or a greater ſhare of good-nature to comfort the diſtreſſed, than Miramillia; but the caſe was here too deſperate, and all ſhe could do for a long time, was to bear her company in tears; but recovering herſelf as well as ſhe was able, ſhe at laſt begged ſhe would not give way to ſorrow; and ſtarting on a ſudden, as one waked from a trance, Since you deſire my advice, Stenoclea, ſaid ſhe, I will give it you, and have bethought me of a way, which, if it ſucceeds, will ſave you from all the miſeries you dread; Armuthi will live; your reputation will be ſafe, and goods and lands preſerved. You muſt, continued ſhe, bend your whole ſtudy to raiſe friends to procure a pardon for your huſband; thus far the duty of a wife obliges you to do; but as it is your brother he

has

has killed, ill would it become you to live with the murderer of ſo near and dear a relation. No, you muſt ſave Armuthi, but muſt ſee him no more. You muſt be content to paſs the remainder of your days in lonely ſolitude, a widow while your huſband lives; and I think, ſaid ſhe, ſhould you diſpoſe, in charitable uſes, one half of that eſtate which by his death would all be forfeited for a leſs pious end; and with the other retire to a cloyſter, there to pray for the expiation of the ſin of him, who, doubtleſs, muſt ſtill be dear to you; it would be the greateſt means of bringing peace to your own mind you could make uſe of; and beſides, be a glorious pattern of virtue, thus fulfilling both the conjugal and fraternal duty.

It was without the leaſt heſitation that Stenoclea aſſured her, ſhe would gladly take her counſel in every particular, but ſeemed to entertain little hopes of prevailing for a pardon for Armuthi; on which Miramillia readily made her an offer of uſing what intereſt ſhe had with the Senate; and indeed ſhe ſo effectually made good her promiſe, that in a week's time ſhe raiſed this afflicted lady from that extremity of deſpair ſhe had been in, by obtaining the life of her dear huſband. His pardon was ſigned, and he was releaſed from priſon; but before he was ſo, Miramillia, who thought Stenoclea could not continue to live with him with honour, took care to remove her to a monaſtery. The diſtraction of Armuthi, when he found on what terms he was ſaved, being nothing material to the intent of this book, I ſhall not go about to deſcribe; therefore ſhall only ſay, that when all he could do had proved ineffectual to move Stenoclea from that reſolution ſhe had taken by the advice of Miramillia, and by the latter of theſe ladies being convinced, that he owed no leſs than ſuch a ſelf-denial to the memory of Barnibar, he followed the example of his wife, and withdrew into a convent, where, among the ſociety of the holy fathers, he was in a little time taught to deſpiſe the vanity of all ſenſual enjoy-

ments, and to ſpend the days allotted him in this world, in preparations for a better. Stenoclea grew a great example of piety; and after their mutual converſion, there paſſed letters between them, which have been printed ſince their deaths, for the edification of others in piety and virtue.

Miramillia left them not till ſhe had ſeen every article of her advice obeyed, and this ſo lately unhappy pair in a fair way of being tranquil in their own minds; and looked upon as eminent examples of reſolution and ſtrength of virtue, by all who knew them or had heard their ſtory.

But now having ſo happily finiſhed this good work, her own misfortunes, and the memory of her dear ſon, made her begin again to think on the fortune-teller's prediction, and renew the ſearch ſhe had for ſome time neglected, to ſerve the unfortunate Stenoclea.

In her way home, ſhe paſſed near the houſe of a lady who ſeemed to live in a perfect tranquility, and who being pretty well advanced in years, ſhe thought might at leaſt be free from that deſtructive paſſion which had been almoſt always the cauſe that ſhe had hitherto found it ſo difficult to have her wiſh accompliſhed.

She ordered her coachman, therefore, to drive to the houſe of this lady, and was received by her in a manner which left her no room to doubt ſhe ſhould be refuſed in the grant of her requeſt, as did the appearance of every thing about her make her hope there was no danger of its not being in her power: ſhe did not, however, immediately acquaint her with the cauſe of her coming, being determined before. She did ſo, to be fully aſſured that her ſearch would not here alſo be as fruitleſs as it had hitherto been. She continued with her three or four days without letting her into the ſecret, in which time ſhe obſerved nothing that could give her cauſe to fear ſhe ſhould have leſs ſucceſs than ſhe wiſhed. Never woman had a more deſerving and obliging huſband; two fine ſons and one daughter were the product of their

marriage

marriage joys; they had an affluence of the goods of fortune, lived beloved and reſpected by their neighbours, and in a perfect tranquillity at home, all the family ſeeming to ſtudy nothing but the ſatisfaction of the other. Such a concord, thought Miramillia, muſt infallibly produce a happineſs, which without it grandeur cannot give; and now determined to purſue her project, communicated to Telliſinda, for ſo was the lady called, the motive which, joined to the regard ſhe had for her, had engaged her to this viſit; but no ſooner had ſhe done ſpeaking, than the other, by a deep ſigh, teſtified how little ſhe was qualified for ſuch an undertaking: which greatly ſurprizing Miramillia, Alas! ſaid ſhe, am I alſo here deceived? Is Telliſinda ſo unthankful to Heaven for the bleſſings ſhe enjoys, as not to be contented with her ſtate? What ſecret care, or rather what imaginary ill, intrudes upon your peace, and poiſons the real felicities of your life?---Ah, my deareſt Miramillia! replied that lady, have a better opinion, I beſeech you, of my underſtanding, than to believe I create dæmons on purpoſe to diſturb and fright me: no; I aſſure you, on the contrary, that it was only my too ſtrenuous endeavours to preſerve my peace that has deſtroyed it; I feared to be unhappy, and have made myſelf ſo; by aiming to avoid misfortunes, I have met them; but I know I ſpeak in riddles, and as my breaſt has long laboured with the ſecret, I will explain it to you, and make you judge, if the griefs I labour under have a ſubſtantial ſource or not. Miramillia was preparing to give her ſome aſſurances of her fidelity, but the other would not ſuffer her to proceed; telling her, that if ſhe had not an entire confidence in her, ſhe ſhould have taken the ſame care to conceal her diſcontent from her, as ſhe had done from the reſt of the world. Some few compliments of this kind being paſt between them, Telliſinda prepared herſelf for the performance of her promiſe, and ſoon after accompliſhed it in theſe terms.

THE HISTORY OF TELLISINDA.

THOUGH, perhaps, said she, never any persons, linked in the bonds of Hymen, loved with a more true affection than myself and the chevalier; yet having been married four years without any child, he grew so excessively discontented, that I had reason to fear a decrease of his tenderness: I endeavoured to console him for the want of a blessing, which, indeed, I then thought I never should afford him, by arguments such as these: I told him, that if we were not permitted to enjoy the comforts of children, we were also free from the troubles and cares which necessarily attend a paternal state; that if Heaven had thought fit to make us parents, we should have been so; and that we ought not to repine at the decrees of him, who knew better what was good for us than we did for ourselves. In fine, I omitted nothing that my little reading, both in divinity and philosophy, enabled me to say; yet still he was uneasy; and though he said nothing in contradiction to what I offered, yet did a sullen peevishness sit on his brow while listening to me, and sometimes he would fling from me, leaving the room while I was in the middle of my discourse. This distemper grew every day more upon him; and I began at last to fear I should entirely lose his affections: the apprehensions of so terrible a misfortune threw me into a deep melancholy; I became oppressed with it, and could not forbear imparting it to a friend, in whom I had great confidence; by her I was persuaded, contrary to my reason, my religion, and that aversion I was bred to have to every thing which bordered on a deceit, to feign myself with child. But as there appeared no other way of regaining the affections of my husband, I was prevailed on to follow her advice. I did so; and the joy which from that time appeared in the countenance of the chevalier, made me well enough satisfied

with what I had done. Eſtharia, for ſo ſhe was called, who had counſelled me to this ſtratagem, took it upon her to provide a child againſt the time in which it was expected I ſhould be delivered. I will not trouble you with the particulars of our management; it ſhall ſuffice to tell you, that the fraud paſſed undiſcovered, and I was ſuppoſed to be the mother of a fine boy. I had ſcarce leiſure for reflection, ſo much were my thoughts employed in anſwering the congratulations of my friends, and the now renewed endearments of the chevalier; but when I had, I cannot ſay I was perfectly at eaſe; the natural antipathy I had to all kinds of deceit, made me look on myſelf with a kind of contempt; and conſcious how little I deſerved the tenderneſs I received from my huſband, at leaſt for that which had engaged it, was aſhamed within myſelf for receiving it. I was for ſome time alſo before I could faſhion myſelf, to behave to the child in any manner becoming a mother; but time, which renders all things eaſy, brought me at length to diſſemble with a good grace enough; and at laſt, indeed, accuſtoming myſelf to fondle and careſs it, grew to have a ſort of tenderneſs: but, alas! it could at moſt be no more than that of a good-natured nurſe, as I ſoon after was convinced; for my ſuppoſed ſon being about a year old, I became, indeed, with child; and I no ſooner found I was ſo, than I perceived a vaſt difference in my affections, even to that unborn product of my own, than I had ever known for that, whoſe little engaging actions could not but excite a ſort of love in me. In due time he, who now paſſes for my younger ſon, but is, indeed, the only one I ever had, made me in reality a mother; and with that name informed me with all thoſe ſoftening fears, thoſe tender perplexities, and raviſhing fondneſſes, which I had ſo often obſerved and wondered at in others. But when the joy of ſeeing that dear image of myſelf gave way to cooler conſideration, how ſeverely did I accuſe myſelf for the deceit I had uſed! how greatly did I blame Eſtharia

for the advice ſhe had given me! But ſhe was now dead, and paſt the reach of my reproaches. The thoughts that he muſt be the inheritor of the eſtate of my dear ſon, drove me almoſt to madneſs, and filled me by degrees with a kind of hatred to that poor innocent, who was but guilty of offending me through my own fault; for I muſt acknowledge, that from his earlieſt infancy till this time, he has diſcovered ſuch a ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, as would have made me happy in being the mother of ſuch a ſon, had I in reality been ſo. He is now eſteemed the fineſt gentleman in this part of the country; and, in ſpite of the prejudice of nature, I cannot but confeſs, that in many things he very much excells his ſuppoſed brother; yet, deſerving as he is, oh Miramillia! he is a ſtranger to my blood, and is it not hard that he ſhould deprive him, who is not, of his inheritance? Yet, by what means ſhall I avoid it? A thouſand times, in the fondneſs of ſoul for the other, I have opened my mouth to tell the chevalier the whole ſtory; but fear and ſhame as often prevented me from ſpeaking. I cannot diſcover the fraud I have been guilty of, without expoſing myſelf at once to the indignation, and, perhaps, eternal hatred of a huſband who is very dear to me, and the juſt cenſure and reproaches of the whole world; for it cannot be ſuppoſed, but that Herranius, ſo is my pretended ſon called, would inveigh loudly againſt the injuſtice of my proceedings. But if I were ſo diſpoſed, I know not by what means I ſhould make out the truth of what I ſay; Eſtharia is dead, as I have before obſerved; there was but one perſon beſide her let into the ſecret, who alſo is no more. I know not from whom that ſubtle creature procured him; nor can I, by any other proof but my own oath, make out that he is not mine: I ſhould incur the hate and ſcorn of all who know me; and, perhaps, leave things in the ſame poſition they were in before. Was ever affliction equal to mine? Have you, in all your inquiſition after happineſs, found a perſon more truly

truly diſtant from it, than the unfortunate Telliſinda? ---It is eaſy, madam, replied Miramillia, for any one, who is a mother, to gueſs a mother's grief in ſo perplexing a circumſtance; yet cannot I adviſe you to throw Herranius off: he is your ſon by adoption, though not by birth; and you know the old Romans made no difference between the one and the other, but according to the virtues they obſerved in them. Herranius, you ſay, has merit; let that endear him to you; you have robbed him of parents, to whom, perhaps, he might have been dear; though misfortunes prevailed on them to part with him for the hope of a better proviſion: not that, methinks, I would have him, who is really your ſon, be deprived of his birth-right; there may be ways and means found out to make them at leaſt equal in their fortunes; and it will be of much better conſequence to ſtudy that, than, by betraying the ſecret to the chevalier, run the hazard of forfeiting his affections; and, at the ſame time, be guilty of a cruelty to an unhappy youth, who thinks himſelf your own.

Telliſinda could not but approve her reaſons; ſhe aſſured her ſhe would take the advice ſhe had ſo kindly given, but could not bring herſelf to that ſtate of tranquillity which was neceſſary to oblige her in the affair which had brought her thither; nor did the other, ſince made acquainted with her ſtory, expect it from her; and therefore took her leave in a ſhort time.

Having made ſo many vain eſſays among the married ladies, ſhe began to imagine that there was no poſſibility of finding one in that ſtate entirely free from care, and therefore reſolved, if ſhe proſecuted her ſearch, it ſhould be only to thoſe who had not yet given up their freedom ſhe would apply. She bethought herſelf of a young lady, who by the death of her parents was left miſtreſs of a very conſiderable fortune; ſhe was very beautiful, and had accompliſhments enough to make her a fit wife for the firſt nobleman in Venice; but her gaiety, and the unaffected eaſe of her converſation, made it evident

ſhe was yet wholly free from any infection from that dangerous paſſion, which is generally the original of all the misfortunes of the fair.

Miramillia had no ſooner recovered the fatigues of her journey, than ſhe went to viſit Amalia, for by that name was this lady diſtinguiſhed; ſhe found a vaſt deal of company with her, and her good humour alone it was which gave life to the converſation. Our afflicted mother did not doubt but that contentment dwelt here, and longed till ſhe had ſeen the other ladies depart, that ſhe might communicate to her the requeſt ſhe had to make. At length this part of her wiſh was fulfilled; and ſhe was beginning to endeavour for the other, when a woman in an ordinary habit came into the room; on the ſight of whom Amalia roſe from her ſeat, and begging pardon of Miramillia for a moment's abſence, ran with her into a cloſet, with all the appearance of a moſt eager impatience in her looks and air. She returned not in a conſiderable time; and when ſhe did, the alteration, which was viſible in her countenance, made Miramillia believe ſome very extraordinary accident had happened; and in that opinion, Madam, ſaid ſhe, I hope you have heard nothing which ſhould rob you of any part of that chearfulneſs which lately was ſo entertaining to your friends?---Oh, madam! replied ſhe, the ſaddeſt accident! I never was ſo much perplexed in my whole life; I would rather have given half my fortune, than have met with ſuch a diſappointment. It is not to be borne. Good God! continued ſhe, fretting more and more, to be debarred of one's will in ſuch a thing as this; ſure I have the hardeſt fortune of any one in the world.---I hope, ſaid Miramillia, you are not entering into a law-ſuit?---No, no, anſwered the other, I have enough to trouble me without that, of a more vexatious nature; never any body was ſo diſappointed, ſo mortified. Theſe words filled Miramillia with a kind of curioſity to know what had worked ſo great a change in her; ſhe continued to aſk her ſeveral queſtions concerning the cauſe of her diſorder,

diſorder, as if it proceeded from the news of the death of ſome one ſhe had a friendſhip for, and ſeveral other ſuch demands; to all which ſhe anſwered in the negative, but joined to it ſtill, that her misfortune was far worſe: which words raiſing to a greater height Miramillia's deſire of knowing, ſhe entreated to be made the confidante of this ſecret; but it was not in the power of the other preſently to comply with her requeſt, the diſturbance of her mind not permitting her to bring forth any more than broken ſentences: tears at length afforded her ſome relief; and after giving a looſe to them for about two or three minutes, ſhe regained the power of ſpeech, and related her calamity in theſe words: you know, ſaid ſhe, that there is a great ball at court next week; all the Beau monde will be there, and every body is endeavouring to be as fine as they can: Sabina, who is, without exception, the vaineſt creature in the world, ſhowed me a piece of the richeſt brocade I ever ſaw in my life, that is to be made up for her againſt the time; and you never heard any thing boaſt with ſo much inſolence as ſhe did, that ſhe ſhould be the beſt dreſſed of any body: ſilly creature! ſhe forgot ſhe was talking to a perſon who could as well afford to purchaſe a handſome thing as herſelf. I was reſolved to be even with her, and had formed a deſign, which, if not prevented by the lazineſs or treachery of the perſon I employed in it, would have been an excellent piece of revenge. With a vaſt deal of induſtry, and ſome artifice, I procured a pattern of Sabina's brocade, and finding it was not to be matched, ſent it to my mercer, whom I ordered to ſhow it to the weaver, that he might make a certain number of yards for me exactly of the ſame figure, but with a vaſt deal more ſilver in the ground: there are alſo ſome large green leaves in it, on which I intended to have had here and there ſeveral ſmall diamonds and rubies, and other precious ſtones tacked on. Oh! it would have been the moſt beautiful fancy, and the richeſt, that ever was ſeen; but, oh Miramillia! the

baſe wretch, that I depended on, that promiſed me ſo faithfully, has diſappointed me; he ſent word juſt now, that he begged my pardon, but could not poſſibly get it done in the time. Was ever ſuch a neglect, ſuch an impudence, when I had told the fellow he muſt work night and day to do it? I could tear him in pieces, and myſelf too, that I muſt be triumphed over by ſuch a creature as Sabina, who, though ſhe is neither handſome nor very young, will have all the world ſtaring at, and admiring, her clothes, while nobody takes any notice of me, though, without any vanity, there is no compariſon between us.

Miramillia could ſcarce contain her laughter at the recital of ſo ridiculous a misfortune; and, willing to conſole her as well as ſhe could——But, dear Amalia! ſaid ſhe, why ſhould you afflict yourſelf ſo deeply? Methinks this vexation might eaſily be removed; there are without doubt other very handſome ſilks in town; buy the richeſt the ſhops will afford, and purſue your deſign of embroidering it with diamonds; I am confident you may make it appear equally glorious with her's, whatever it be. That is true, replied Amalia; but, my dear, you miſtake the thing: the mortification I propoſed to give her pride was this, to have of the very ſame pattern a ſilk ſo infinitely to outſhine her's. I would not give a ryal to be finer than ſhe in any other dreſs; but it would have been the moſt elegant ſatisfaction to have obſerved the baulk it would have been to her, to have beheld her own pattern ſo much outdone. But why do I talk of it? continued ſhe; my hope is paſt; all my deſigns are fruſtrated; and I muſt content myſelf either to feign an indiſpoſition and ſtay at home, or, by going there, reſolve to endure all the fine compliments that will be made her on the delicacy of her fancy.

All that Miramillia could ſay to her was of little ſervice to make her in a better humour, and ſhe was obliged to leave her to indulge it, not imparting any thing of the reaſons which had induced her to this viſit; rightly judging,

judging, that when people ſet their hearts on trifles, a diſappointment, even in them, is as hard to be endured, as things of the greateſt conſequence are to others.

Not being willing yet to give over her ſearch, the next whoſe character promiſed her ſucceſs was Clorilla, a young lady of great birth, beauty, and education; but ſhe was inconſolable, becauſe her father, being of a different turn of mind, had refuſed a poſt of honour offered him by the Senate, and another had accepted it, who had daughters, that by virtue of their father's office were now entitled to ſit above her in all public aſſemblies. She bore this vexation with much the ſame degree of moderation, as Amalia had done the diſappointment of her ſilk: Miramillia concluding nothing was to be expected here to forward the experiment ſhe was ſo much deſirous to make trial of, ordered her coach to drive to the houſe of Claribella, a young lady who ſeemed to have every thing that can complete happineſs excepting a huſband, and that was every day in her power to be poſſeſſed of, being ſollicited in marriage by the richeſt and moſt accompliſhed noblemen in Venice; but ſhe appeared no friend to love, and declared to all her acquaintance, that ſhe had yet never ſeen the man who had any temptations for her to quit her liberty. She had the reputation of being of the moſt eaſy, as well as gay temper imaginable; and Miramillia accuſed herſelf of want of thought, that ſhe had not made the firſt application to her, which might probably have ſaved her the trouble of the reſt: but, alas! ſhe had not time to communicate to her the intent of her viſit, before ſhe had reaſon to ſuſpect it would be of little purpoſe: ſhe received her indeed with all the civilities due to a lady of her quality and character, but yet there might be ſeen a ſort of peeviſhneſs in all her air, which denoted ſhe was far from being perfectly at eaſe; which Miramillia perceiving, aſked if ſhe was well; and that queſtion preſently informed her how much fame had deceived her in reporting this lady for a woman of ſo much good hu-

mour. I am not at all ſurprized, madam, anſwered ſhe, that you ſhould take me to be indiſpoſed; not that I think I am at all altered ſince you ſaw me laſt, but the prodigious charms of Iſmenia make too great an eclat to ſuffer any other woman to be thought tolerable. It would be impoſſible to repreſent the ſurprize in which theſe words involved the perſon to whom they were addreſſed; ſhe knew, indeed, there was a lady called Iſmenia; that ſhe was the daughter of a ſenator, and eſteemed a very lovely maid; but what concern this ſhould be of Claribella's, or why ſhe ſhould name her to a perſon who had not the leaſt acquaintance with her, ſhe could not imagine: to eaſe herſelf, therefore, of this perplexity, As I am ignorant, ſaid ſhe, of any of the affairs of that lady, I cannot gueſs of what conſequence her beauty can be to you.---Pardon me, madam, reſumed the other, your late griefs have, perhaps, made you regardleſs of the news of the town, elſe it is impoſſible but you muſt have heard the vaſt reputation Iſmenia has acquired by the death of Charino.---You would oblige me with the relation of it, ſaid Miramillia; for I aſſure you I never heard it mentioned, though I had formerly ſome acquaintance with Charino, and looked on him as a moſt accompliſhed gentleman.---He was ſo, replied Claribella; and no doubt, but if he had made his application, might have been thought well of by women of greater diſtinction than Iſmenia: but what he ſaw in her, Heaven knows! to inſpire him with ſo prodigious a paſſion; the more he adored, the more ſhe inſulted. I never ſaw any thing in my life arrive at that monſtrous height of vanity ſhe did; nor a man, eſpecially one who had ſenſe too, degenerate to ſo low and mean a ſubmiſſion as did Charino: he was like her ſhadow, followed her wherever ſhe went, talked of her in all company as of the moſt lovely creature in the world. Thus it went on between them for about three months, at the end of which, ſhe continuing to uſe him ill, he ſhot himſelf through the head, leaving a letter behind him,

him, to acquaint the world for what cauſe he did it. Since this demonſtration of her power, there is no enduring Iſmenia; ſhe is grown ſo aſſuming, that it is impoſſible to converſe with her; and yet you cannot imagine how much ſhe is admired by the men. I ſuppoſe they think, becauſe one has been fool enough to die for her, that ſhe really deſerves to be cried up in the manner ſhe is; in fine, there is nothing now talked of in town but her beauty; ſhe is the general toaſt; and it is looked on as folly or envy not to join in the ridiculous praiſes which are given her.---This is the firſt time I ever heard of this adventure, ſaid Miramillia, and am extremely ſorry that Charino ſhould have ſo ſmall a ſenſe of the duties of religion, and ſo poignant a one of a fooliſh paſſion. But I cannot ſee why you ſhould be diſcontented at it, any farther than common compaſſion for the untimely death of ſo agreeable a chevalier. If Iſmenia has ſtupidity enough to be pleaſed with ſo fatal an effect of her charms, and is induced by her vanity to behave in the manner you deſcribe, it is eaſy to break off all acquaintance with her; for my part, though I am concerned when I ſee any of my ſex give way to foibles of that kind, I think it not my duty to afflict myſelf for what I cannot prevent, nor happens through any fault of mine.---But can I ſtop my ears from the encomiums with which I am perpetually perſecuted? cried Claribella. Can any thing be more provoking, than to ſee mankind ſo much bewitched to a creature, that, in my opinion, has no one good quality to attract their admiration? Does not the whole world run mad after her, worſhip her as a goddeſs? The meaneſt of the people, unbleſſed with opportunity to view the mighty wonder near, ſtand in the ſtreet in throngs, watching her coming out, then croud about her chariot, crying, How fair ſhe is! How exquiſitely charming! Whereever ſhe goes, all eyes are fixed upon her; all tongues ſeem to outvie each other in her praiſe, as if the folly of Charino had ſpread its infection through all the race of man.

man. No, certainly, replied Miramillia, (with a half ſmile, now plainly perceiving the cauſe of her diſquiet) not through all, I dare ſay; you have your admirers, who confeſs your power of charming. --- Coxcombs! wretches all! reſumed the fair votary of envy, what avails their pretending a paſſion for me, when they do nothing to atteſt it to the world? Oh, Miramillia! a woman gains more glory to have one man die for her, than to have a thouſand live and languiſh at her feet. It was not all Charino could ſay or ſwear, that ſet up the fame of Iſmenia; but in that one action, his death, he has recorded the force of her charms to all poſterity. Heavens! how fortunate ſome women are, and how much the contrary others! Notwithſtanding my great eſtate, allowed good qualities, and birth, I paſs for nothing in the eſteem of the world, am unregarded, ſlighted; and yet, without my glaſs extremely deceives me, ſhe is far from having the pre-eminence over me, either in face or ſhape. Good God! how is it poſſible to be contented under ſuch viſible partiality? She had not, perhaps, given over her exclamations for a much longer time, had the torrent of her tears allowed the power of farther ſpeech: nor could Miramillia offer any thing to interrupt her, ſo greatly was ſhe amazed that a woman, endued with good ſenſe in other things, ſhould ſo much ſuffer it to be debaſed by her exceſſive vanity and deſire of admiration. But perceiving ſhe had left off ſpeaking, ſhe could not forbear mixing ſome grave reproofs with her conſolations; ſhe begged her to conſider how little eſſential to true happineſs was the being accounted beautiful, and how much better it was to be ſincerely loved by one worthy man, than to have the noiſy encomiums of the whole ſex; and at the ſame time reminded her, that nothing was more an argument of a mean and ungenerous ſoul than to envy another, either for real or imaginary perfections. But how little effect ſuch kind of diſcourſes were able to work on her, any one, who in the courſe of their life has met with a

woman

woman of Claribella's temper, may eaſily believe. She ſaid nothing, however, in oppoſition to her perſuaſions; but the other finding little hopes of making a convert of her, ſhortened her viſit, and departed with a perfect indignation in her mind, that perſons, whom Heaven deſigned to bleſs, ſhould, by their own perverſeneſs of diſpoſition, render themſelves unhappy. But her own misfortunes hindering her from giving too much attention to the calamities of others, whether real or imaginary, ſhe reſolved to make yet one more eſſay.

Selinda was a young lady very much celebrated for an uncommon ſhare of wit and underſtanding; and being endowed with every thing ſhe could wiſh for in life, ſhe imagined not that ſuch a one would diſcontent herſelf with any fancied ills. To her therefore ſhe reſolved to apply, and in a few days made her a viſit, with all that form which is made uſe of among people who live in the great world, and are not ſufficiently acquainted with each other, to have made a mutual agreement to throw off thoſe tireſome and indeed unneceſſary ceremonies.

But ſhe was ſoon convinced how much ſhe was deceived in her expectations here; for deſiring to ſpeak with her, the chief attendant, with air affected, and all that mimickry of good breeding which thoſe ſort of people abound with, told her, that her lady could by no means appear; that her favourite lap-dog had died of an apoplexy ſome few days ago, and ſhe was inconſolable for ſo great a misfortune; but that as ſoon as ſhe ſaw company, ſhe was very certain ſhe would think herſelf favoured in a viſit from her. This put Miramillia beyond all patience: Heavens! cried ſhe to herſelf, are all our ſex devoted to diſquiet? Is there a fate upon us to be wretched? Muſt we labour under woes of our own formation, when Fortune contributes all ſhe can to make us happy? Good God! continued ſhe, that even wit is not a defence from vanity and affectation! Thus, like Amalia, Clorilla and Claribella, do we torment ourſelves with childiſh and imaginary ills,

ills, till taught by real ones how mad we have been, and wiſh the paſt could be again recalled.

Theſe reflections induced our afflicted mother to return to her houſe, with a firm reſolution to give over an enquiry which ſhe was now convinced would be altogether fruitleſs, and depend wholly on Heaven for the reſtoration of her peace; either by hearing of her dear ſon, or by obtaining a ſtock of patience to ſupport the uncertainty.

She had not fixed this determination many days, before ſhe found the good effects of it: that ſon, whoſe abſence ſhe had ſo long deplored, and who nobody now believed was in the world, was, when ſhe leaſt expected it, returned to her embraces. A coach-and-ſix, containing the young Adario, ſo he was called, a grave old gentleman, and a moſt beautiful virgin, came to her gate. The tranſport ſhe was in to behold once more that darling of her ſoul, left her not the power of obſerving by whom he was accompanied: ſhe hung upon his neck; ſhe claſped him with raptures, ſuch as only mothers know; ſhe gazed on him with an agony of pleaſure; for a long time ſhe could bring no other words, than, My ſon! My ſon! Adario! My dear Adario! But extaſy at length giving way to reflection: Where have you been? ſhe cried, and why, by your abſence and your ſilence, have you involved me in griefs which have been very near fatal to me?---Oh pardon the tranſgreſſion of my ſeeming neglect, beſt of parents, and of women, anſwered he; but as it is to this gentleman you are indebted for my life, be pleaſed to hear from his mouth my vindication. Theſe words making her turn her eyes on the company, ſhe immediately knew the perſon he mentioned to be ſignior Clotario, one who had been the moſt paſſionate of her adorers, when in a virgin ſtate; but being rejected by her for the father of Adario, his deſpair had made him ſeveral times attempt the life of that more happy rival, for which there had ever ſince remained an extreme hatred between the families;

lies; but to be told that he had been inſtrumental in preſerving Adario, chaſed from her breaſt all ſentiments but thoſe of gratitude: ſhe received him with all civility; and being told by him, that the young lady who came with him was his daughter, made her all the compliments her beauty and fine air demanded from as many as ſaw her. After which, being impatient to know by what means they had become acquainted with her ſon, ſhe preſſed for the gratification of that deſire; and Clotario, pleaſed to oblige, began in this manner:

THE HISTORY OF FELICIA AND ADARIO.

THIS young girl, ſaid he, pointing to Felicia, is the only child I ever had by a lady who, after Miramillia, ſeemed moſt worthy of my affections; but the preſent ſhe had made me of her, proved fatal to herſelf: ſhe died in child-bed; and though I was extremely afflicted for her loſs, I thought it would better become the love I bore her, to tranſplant it to the dear pledge ſhe left me, than to waſte my whole thoughts on what was not to be recovered by all my cares. Few fathers regard their children with that tenderneſs I have ever done Felicia, and to do her juſtice, none ever ſeemed more to deſerve it. When grown to an age to be ſenſible of my indulgence and her own duty, ſhe made it all her ſtudy to let me ſee the one was not thrown away, by her ſtrict obſervance of the other. I ſhall paſs over in ſilence the improvements ſhe made in all the accompliſhments I thought it proper ſhe ſhould be inſtructed in, leſt you ſhould imagine I conſider her with too partial an opinion. Such as ſhe is, however, the nobleſt chevaliers in the country ſolicited my conſent to obtain her in marriage; but ſhe appeared ſo far from

from having any inclination to enter into that ſtate, that ſhe entreated me with the utmoſt earneſtneſs to permit her to remain as ſhe was. I loved her too well to preſs her to any thing ſhe diſliked, and aſſured her I would never exert my authority in that point, unleſs I ſhould ſee her agitated with a blind paſſion for one unworthy of her; ſhe proteſted, ſhe would never entertain the leaſt emotions of that kind, without firſt knowing if I was willing ſhe ſhould indulge them; and I obſerved in her ſo much diſcretion in other things, that I made no ſcruple of believing her. I depended entirely on her conduct, and was free from thoſe corroding cares which ſo much perplex the generality of fathers. But the greater my imagined ſecurity, the greater my diſappointment, when I had reaſon to believe myſelf deceived. One morning, ſurprized that ſhe came not to pay her uſual teſtimonies of obedience, I ſent to her chamber to enquire her health, and was informed that ſhe went early into the fields, accompanied by a young man called Ferroneſe, the ſon of a perſon who had formerly been a ſervant to me. I was not pleaſed to hear ſhe was gone out ſo attended; not that I thought ſhe could be inſpired with any affection for a man ſo much beneath her; but that having heard a bad character of him, I ſuſpected he might be employed as an emiſſary from ſome other, whom I was certain I ſhould not approve, thus recommended. I was juſt ſending to order ſhe ſhould return, when a poor man, who happened to be at work in the grounds, came running almoſt out of breath to inform me, he had ſeen Ferroneſe on horſeback with Felicia before him, who ſhrieking and crying out for help, plainly teſtified ſhe had no hand in her own rape. I demanded which way they went, and having been informed, made my ſervants immediately mount in their purſuit. They obeyed with diligence, and were ſo ſucceſsful in their ſearch, that in the foreſt of Adorno, behind your caſtle, they found my daughter rending the air with cries, and ſtanding between two perſons who

ſeemed

ſeemed dead, or dying; one of them was the falſe Ferroneſe, and the other her valiant defender, the gallant Adario: but his name or perſon being utterly a ſtranger to her, ſhe told them, that as it was to that brave unknown ſhe was indebted for the preſervation of her honour, ſhe ſhould think herſelf the moſt ungrateful of women, if ſhe did not uſe her utmoſt endeavours to bring him out of a condition in which he fell but for her ſake. She added, That there were ſigns of life in him, and therefore ordered ſome of the men to ride with all ſpeed to the next town for a litter; while ſhe endeavoured, as well as ſhe could, to bind his wounds. Her commands being obeyed, he was brought in that manner to my houſe; where the truth being related to me, I commended her behaviour, and was no leſs zealous than ſhe had been, to ſave the life of a perſon to whom I was obliged for the reſtoration and protection of my child. The ſurgeons no ſooner looked on his wounds, than they informed me none of them were mortal, and that his only danger conſiſted in loſs of blood, and having lain ſo long. They gave me hopes, however, of his life, and nothing was omitted which might prevent the diſappointment of thoſe hopes. In a few hours he opened his eyes, and ſoon after had the uſe of ſpeech; but we forbore aſking him any queſtions, being told, that nothing would be ſo prejudicial to him as noiſe or light. We exactly obſerved the orders given us by thoſe to whom we committed the care of him; but I could not avoid taking notice that Felicia enquired of his health, with a concern which ſeemed to have in it ſomething more than gratitude. When ſhe related how bravely he had fought in her relief, and with what courage and galantry he flew, in the defence of her chaſtity, on the villain who attempted it, her eyes ſparkled with fire I had never ſeen in them before. She ſeemed agitated with an unuſual warmth. She took pleaſure in repeating the tale whenever ſhe had an opportunity. She was tranſported at the hopes given her

her of his recovery: ſhe could not conceal her diſorders whenever any ſuſpicious words were let fall, that it was dubious: in fine, her very look and action expreſſed a tenderneſs which made me tremble. Pardon me, excellent Miramillia, I knew him not for Adario; and though, even in that diſmal ſtate, I perceived enough about him, to believe him not unworthy of her; yet the uncertainty whether he might look on her with the ſame eyes, or indeed might be in a condition to return her affection, made me fear ſhe ſhould place it on him. I concealed my ſentiments, however, till I ſhould be more aſſured, judging with reaſon, that if my conjectures were true, ſhe would be more wary in her behaviour before me. The great ſkill and care that was employed, in a week's time relieved us from the fears of the death of our gueſt, and the young Felicia could not conceal a joy at the news, which heightened my ſuſpicions. It was more than a month, however, before we were permitted to ſpeak to him, and then no more than to teſtify our zeal for his recovery, ſo extremely weak was his condition. We were told by the perſons employed to watch with him, that the chief uſe he made of his recovered ſpeech, was, firſt, to enquire in whoſe houſe he was; and being told it belonged to the perſon in whoſe daughter's cauſe he had received thoſe wounds, he expreſſed the utmoſt ſatisfaction; but that on the hearing my name, it viſibly abated, and he ſeemed rather troubled, than the contrary, to receive any obligations from Clotario. He could not, however, refrain aſking many queſtions concerning Felicia; ſuch as what ſollicitations ſhe had for marriage, who were the pretenders to her, which of them ſhe ſeemed moſt to favour, or to whom I was inclined to diſpoſe of her, by what means ſhe came to be expoſed to the danger from which he had delivered her? All which being anſwered according to the direct truth, they ſaid he expreſſed an infinity of pleaſure, to hear ſhe was not yet engaged either by duty or inclination. I

could.

could not be told theſe things, without believing the ſame ſentiments had inſpired them both; and having myſelf, as you very well know, madam, experienced the force of love, ſincerely wiſhed he might be of ſuch a quality as might not render their's unfortunate, which I very much feared, becauſe of the regret with which he heard of her's. Admittance at laſt being allowed, I went to viſit him, taking Felicia with me; decency and gratitude I thought obliging her to pay this reſpect to one to whom ſhe was indebted for all that was moſt dear to her: I imagined alſo, that by being preſent at this interview, I ſhould be able to aſſure myſelf of the ſentiments of them both, more fully, perhaps, than any other way; and indeed there required but little penetration to read in their countenances what paſſed in their hearts. Their affection for each other was as apparent as the care they took to conceal it; nor can I ſay, that I was much troubled at it; there was ſomething in the face and voice of Adario that inſenſibly attached me to him. I did not indeed, Miramillia, think of you at that time, much leſs imagine that this noble youth was your ſon; yet it is certain, that great reſemblance he has to a form which had been once ſo dear to me, it was that filled me with impreſſions ſo much in his favour. The firſt civilities being over, I deſired him to let me know to whom I had been ſo much obliged; but never did I ſee ſo ſudden and ſo ſtrange an alteration as appeared in him at this demand. That extreme paleneſs, which the weakneſs of his condition had ſpread over his face, now gave way to a fluſhing red; it ſeemed as if his whole little remains of blood had forſook all other parts to paint his bluſhing cheeks. His lips trembled as he was about to make reply, nor could he preſently bring forth a word; but when he did, it was in this manner: How eaſy were it for me, ſaid he, to impoſe on your belief, by giving myſelf a name to which I have no pretence! But know, my lord, that whatever I am, I was bred to hate deceit; and as there

is an unſurmountable reaſon for my concealing from what family I am deſcended, think it a leſs misfortune to run the hazard of paſſing in your eſteem, as a perſon who has done ſomething, for which he is afraid or aſhamed to own himſelf for what he is, than to be conſcious of a crime like falſhood. This only (continued he) I entreat you to believe of me, that I am wholly devoted to your ſervice, and am ſo far from regretting that in it I have ſpent part of my blood, that I would gladly ſhed the remainder on the ſame account, and bleſs Heaven for nothing more earneſtly, than that I have been the happy inſtrument of reſtoring the admirable Felicia to your embraces. Here he ceaſed to ſpeak, and the aſtoniſhment his words involved me in, left me not the power of making him an immediate anſwer; I was confounded, I knew not what to think, I could not believe he was of a birth inferior to what his pride would make him wiſh to be thought; there was ſomething ſo noble in his air and countenance, as preſently checked all ſuggeſtions of that kind. Nor could I imagine he had been guilty of any thing which ſhould oblige him to conceal himſelf: that galant freedom with which he ſpoke, and that love of truth which he preferred to all things, made me conceive the higheſt opinion of his honour, and his juſtice: in fine, what he ſaid was both pleaſing and diſturbing to me; I admired him more than I had done, but was more fearful than I had been, leſt Felicia ſhould do ſo too. When the tumults of my thoughts would give me leave, I told him, that the obligations I was under to him, forbad I ſhould preſs to know any thing he was unwilling to reveal; nor, as I had done nothing to deſerve his confidence, could not take it ill that he refuſed it me. However, purſued I, before we part, you may perhaps have a better opinion of my diſcretion and my gratitude; and as a proof that you are deſirous to make trial of both, I beg you will command every thing in this houſe, with the ſame freedom as you would your own.

own. He made no other reply to theſe words than bowing his head, for he had not yet recovered ſtrength enough to move his body in the leaſt; after this we began to talk of the villainy of Ferroneſe, and the little ſecurity a young woman can have out of the preſence of thoſe whom duty and nature oblige to be tender of her honour. Felicia excuſed her going into the field with him, by ſaying he told her, there was that moment a great mountain raiſed at the end of it in that night, which he imagined had been done by an earthquake; ſhe added, that not having the leaſt ſuſpicion that he had any deſign on her, nor could apprehend a danger of any kind ſo near the houſe, ſhe had run out to ſee this wonder, at the garden-gate which led to the field, and happened to be then open; but that ſhe was no ſooner out of hearing, than ſhe perceived a horſe tied by the bridle to a tree, on which he mounted, taking her by force in his arms, and making no ſtop till he came to that wood, where Adario found him ready to ſacrifice her honour to a paſſion ſhe would not conſent to gratify by marriage with him. I obſerved, while Felicia was relating to Adario the means by which ſhe was carried away, ſhe took a more than ordinary pains in excuſing her inadvertency; and this ſerved to convince me more, that ſhe was in reality as ſenſible of the tender paſſion as it is poſſible for a young heart to be. We continued in the chamber till a certain faintneſs, which his countenance, in ſpite of him, betrayed, reminded me that we had put him on the neceſſity of ſpeaking more than his ſtrength would bear; and indeed the ſurgeon found him ſo diſordered at his next viſit, that he deſired we would forbear any further converſation with him for a good while. It was near another month before we were ſuffered to go into his chamber, any farther than the door, to enquire after his health, which I conſtantly did every day. But I took notice, that after this, Felicia grew extremely melancholy, and at laſt ſo pale, and her whole air ſo dejected,

jected, that ſhe was ſcarcely to be known: I gueſſed, that this change in her proceeded from the endeavours ſhe made to conquer the paſſion ſhe had entertained for a perſon who was reſolved to continue a ſtranger to her; and to forward her cure, ſent her to the houſe of a ſiſter of mine, who had many children of much the ſame age with herſelf, in whoſe ſociety I hoped her melancholy might abate: I perceived an unwillingneſs in her to go, but not ſo much as offered any thing in oppoſition to it. But ſhe had not been there many days before my ſiſter ſent her back, fearing ſome ſad effect of her diſtemper, which, from the moment ſhe left home, had increaſed by ſuch ſwift degrees, that at her return ſhe ſeemed but like the ſpectre of the once gay Felicia. Adario too, on hearing ſhe was gone, fell into convulſions, which were near being fatal to him; this new diſorder, however, retarded his recovery ſo much, that it was near four months before he was able to walk about his chamber. I was ſo greatly affected with their mutual diſtreſs, that I reſolved to relieve it, if by any means I could: but neither of them having declared their ſentiments to me, I was at a loſs how to break the knowledge I had of them, either to the one or the other. My concern for my child, whom I ſaw almoſt at the point of death, made me at laſt caſt aſide all ſcruples. I revealed to her the diſcovery I had made, and perceiving ſhe was in a confuſion ſcarce ſupportable, I endeavoured to comfort her, and told her it was no breach of modeſty for a young maid to be charmed with merit ſuch as our gueſt appeared to be maſter of. I aſſured her alſo, that I ſaw the ſame paſſion working as powerfully in his ſoul as in her's, and that if there was no greater impediment than I could yet foreſee, marriage ſhould, in a ſmall time, complete their mutual wiſhes. The anſwers ſhe made were but ſhort, and conſiſted only in thanks for the tenderneſs I expreſſed for her repoſe; yet could I plainly diſcern the greateſt indulgence

indulgence on any other ſcore would have availed but little to the recovery of her peace.

From her I went to the chamber of Adario, whom I found extremely penſive; I would not, as yet, take any notice to him of my deſign, being deſirous of ſeeing if he would reveal to Felicia more than he was willing to do to me: to accompliſh which intent, I ordered dinner to be ſerved in his chamber, ſeeing he was now in a condition to endure company. This was done every day; and ſometimes pretending ſudden buſineſs, I would retire, on purpoſe to give him the liberty of explaining himſelf, if he had courage to do ſo. I queſtioned my daughter concerning his behaviour, and ſhe with bluſhes at laſt confeſſed, that he had declared himſelf her lover; that having told him ſhe could not, without breach of modeſty, accept of any propoſals of that kind from a perſon, who, while he made an offer of his heart, concealed his name; he aſſured her, that his quality was not inferior to hers; but that, when ſhe preſſed him to make it known, he only ſighed, and turned his head away. I need not repeat the trouble I was in at this latter part of the account. You may believe, on the one ſide, I was infinitely concerned at the deſpair of a child ſo dear to me; and, on the other, could not think of giving her to a man, from whom nothing could draw the ſecret of his birth. After a long conſideration, I commanded Felicia to inform him, ſhe would liſten no farther to the declarations he ceaſed not to make her, nor on any terms believe his pretenſions were ſuch as were conſiſtent with honour, unleſs he made them known to me, and alſo from what parents he derived his being. She obeyed, and he appeared in all the confuſion imaginable; he told her, that he had not the leaſt hope of ſucceeding; that all the reaſon he had ſo long concealed himſelf was, that he was certain of loſing all that good-will the ſervice he had done me had acquired, when once that fatal ſecret ſhould be diſcovered:—There is, ſaid he, an enmity

between our parents, which, on the ſide of yours, I fear will never ceaſe. But why ſhould I delay your attention? He, at length, was prevailed on to diſcover himſelf your ſon; which I was no ſooner made acquainted with, than I felt a tranſport which no tongue is able to expreſs.---The merits of Adario ſeemed now to ſhine with double luſtre, when I knew they were derived from Miramillia. Miramillia! whom I have never ceaſed to admire, even when my raſh deſpair made me attempt the life of the man moſt dear to her: I flew immediately to Adario, I embraced him with all the demonſtration of a paternal affection, aſſuring him, I ſhould think myſelf bleſſed in making him my ſon. There remains, ſaid I, but one impediment to our common ſatisfaction, the conſent of your excellent mother, her forgiveneſs of a crime, which I have ſince ſeverely repented of, and vouchſafing to join your hands. Adario returned my endearments as became his affection to my daughter, and gave me hopes you would not be leſs bounteous to his wiſhes than I had been.

Thus, madam, continued he, have you heard the hiſtory of a paſſion, which, as violent as it is, has not tranſported the perſons influenced by it to act any thing contrary to duty, or to honour; all the tenderneſs Felicia has been ſo fortunate to inſpire in the ſoul of Adario, has never made him once intreat the gratification of his deſires, till authorized by your permiſſion. If then the mutual love of theſe darlings of the hearts of us both, can be of any power to move you; or the ſincere penitence of Clotario mitigate the guilt of his former raſhneſs, behold I join in their ſubmiſſions, and intreat you will not be refractory to their wiſhes.

Here ceaſed Clotario to ſpeak; and taking Adario in one hand, and Felicia in the other, they all three fell on their knees before Miramillia; who expreſſing ſome confuſion to ſee Clotario in that poſture, firſt raiſed him in the moſt obliging manner, then embraced Felicia and Adario with a tenderneſs, which denoted ſhe would be

far

ſar from oppoſing their deſires; which ſhe ſoon after ratified by her words.

Thus was this houſe of mourning now converted to a proportionable joy: not only Felicia, but Clotario, ſhe obliged to have apartments with her, till preparations were made for the marriage, which was ſoon after completed, to the unſpeakable ſatisfaction of all who were concerned in it.

END of the SECOND VOLUME.